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REVIEWS

BY

OSCAR WILDE

VOLUME II

AUTHORISED EDITION

THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY, LTD.
TORONTO

JOHN W. LUCE & CO.
BOSTON

PR 5812

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1910

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THE POETS' CORNER

IV

(Pall Mall Gazette, January 20, 1888.)

A CYNICAL critic once remarked that no great poet is intelligible and no little poet worth understanding, but that otherwise poetry is an admirable thing. This, however, seems to us a somewhat harsh view of the subject. Little poets are an extremely interesting study. The best of them have often some new beauty to show us, and though the worst of them may bore yet they rarely

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brutalise. *Poor Folks' Lives*, for instance, by the Rev. Frederick Langbridge, is a volume that could do no possible harm to any one. These poems display a healthy, rollicking, G. R. Sims tone of feeling, an almost unbounded regard for the converted drunkard, and a strong sympathy with the sufferings of the poor. As for their theology, it is of that honest, downright and popular kind, which in these rationalistic days is probably quite as useful as any other form of theological thought. Here is the opening of a poem called *A Street Sermon*, which is an interesting example of what muscular Christianity can do in the sphere of verse-making:

What, God fight shy of the city?
He's t' other side up I guess;
If you ever want to find Him,
Whitechapel's the right address.

Those who prefer pseudo-poetical prose to really prosaic poetry will wish that Mr. Dalziel had converted most of his *Pictures in the Fire* into leaders for the *Daily Telegraph*, as, from the literary point of view, they have all the qualities dear to the Asiatic school. What a splendid leader the young lions of Fleet Street would have made out of *The Prestige of England*, for instance, a poem suggested by the opening of the Zulu war in 1879.

Now away sail our ships far away o'er the sea,
Far away with our gallant and brave;
The loud war-cry is sounding like wild revelriè,
And our heroes dash on to their grave;
For the fierce Zulu tribes have arisen in their might,
And in thousands swept down on our few;
But these braves only yielded when crushed in the fight,
Man to man to their colours were true.

The conception of the war-cry sounding 'like wild revelriè' is quite in the true Asiatic spirit, and

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indeed the whole poem is full of the daring English of a special correspondent. Personally, we prefer Mr. Dalziel when he is not quite so military. *The Fairies*, for instance, is a very pretty poem, and reminds us of some of Dicky Doyle's charming drawings, and *Nat Bentley* is a capital ballad in its way. The Irish poems, however, are rather vulgar and should be expunged. The Celtic element in literature is extremely valuable, but there is absolutely no excuse for shrieking 'Shillelagh!' and 'O Gorrah!'

Women must Weep, by Professor Harald Williams, has the most dreadful cover of any book that we have come across for some time past. It is possibly intended to symbolise the sorrow of the world, but it merely suggests the decorative tendencies of an undertaker and is as depressing as it is detestable. However, as the cowl does not make the monk, so the binding, in the case of the Savile Club school, does not make the poet, and we open the volume without prejudice. The first poem that we come to is a vigorous attack on those wicked and misguided people who believe that Beauty is its own reason for existing, and that Art should have no other aim but her own perfection. Here are some of the Professor's gravest accusations:

Why do they patch, in their fatal choice,
When at secrets such the angels quake,
But a play of the Vision and the Voice?—
Oh, it's all for Art's sake.

Why do they gather what should be left,
And leave behind what they ought to take,
And exult in the basest blank or theft?—
Oh, it's all for Art's sake.

It certainly must be admitted that to 'patch' or

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to 'exult in the basest blank' is a form of conduct quite unbefitting an artist, the very obscurity and incomprehensible character of such a crime adding something to its horror. However, while fully recognising the wickedness of 'patching' we cannot but think that Professor Harald Williams is happier in his criticism of life than he is in his art criticism. His poem *Between the Banks*, for instance, has a touch of sincerity and fine feeling that almost atones for its over-emphasis.

Mr. Buchan's blank verse drama *Joseph and His Brethren* bears no resemblance to that strange play on the same subject which Mr. Swinburne so much admires. Indeed, it may be said to possess all the fatal originality of inexperience. However, Mr. Buchan does not leave us in any doubt about his particular method of writing. 'As to the dialogue,' he says, 'I have put the language of real life into the mouths of the speakers, except when they may be supposed to be under strong emotion; then their utterances become more rapid—broken—figurative—in short more poetical.' Well, here is the speech of Potiphar's wife under strong emotion:

ZULEEKHA (*seizing him*).

Love me! or death!

Ha! dost thou think thou wilt not, and yet live?
By Isis, no. And thou wilt turn away,
Iron, marble mockman! Ah! I hold thy life!
Love feeds on death. It swallows up all life,
Hugging, or killing. I to woo, and thou—
Unhappy me! Oh!

The language here is certainly rapid and broken, and the expression 'marble mockman' is, we suppose, figurative, but the passage can scarcely be described as poetical, though it fulfils all Mr. Buchan's conditions. Still, tedious as Zuleekha and Joseph are, the Chorus of Ancients is much worse.

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These 'ideal spectators' seem to spend their lives in uttering those solemn platitudes that with the aged pass for wisdom. The chief offenders are the members of what Mr. Buchan calls 'The 2nd.—Semi-chorus,' who have absolutely no hesitation in interrupting the progress of the play with observations of this kind:

2ND.—SEMI-CHORUS

Ah! but favour extreme shown to one
Among equals yet stand apart,
Awakeneth, say ye, if naturally,
The demons—jealousy, envy, hate,—
In the breast of those passed by.

It is a curious thing that when minor poets write choruses to a play they should always consider it necessary to adopt the style and language of a bad translator. We fear that Mr. Bonn has much to answer for.

God's Garden is a well-meaning attempt to use Nature for theological and educational purposes. It belongs to that antiquated school of thought that, in spite of the discoveries of modern science, invites the sluggard to look at the ant, and the idle to imitate the bee. It is full of false analogies and dull eighteenth-century didactics. It tells us that the flowering cactus should remind us that a dwarf may possess mental and moral qualities, that the mountain ash should teach us the precious fruits of affliction, and that a fond father should learn from the example of the chestnut that the most beautiful children often turn out badly! We must admit that we have no sympathy with this point of view, and we strongly protest against the idea that

The flaming poppy, with its black core, tells
Of anger's flushing face, and heart of sin.

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The worst use that man can make of Nature is to turn her into a mirror for his own vices, nor are Nature's secrets ever disclosed to those who approach her in this spirit. However, the author of this irritating little volume is not always botanising and moralising in this reckless and improper fashion. He has better moments, and those who sympathise with the Duke of Westminster's efforts to provide open spaces for the people, will no doubt join in the aspiration—

God bless wise Grosvenors whose hearts incline,
Workmen to fête, and grateful souls refine;

though they may regret that so noble a sentiment is expressed in so inadequate a form.

It is difficult to understand why Mr. Cyrus Thornton should have called his volume *Voices of the Street*. However, poets have a perfect right to christen their own children, and if the wine is good no one should quarrel with the bush. Mr. Thornton's verse is often graceful and melodious, and some of his lines, such as—

And the wise old Roman bondsman saw no terror in the dead—
Children when the play was over, going softly home to bed,

have a pleasant Tennysonian ring. The *Ballad of the Old Year* is rather depressing. 'Bury the Old Year Solemnly' has been said far too often, and the sentiment is suitable only for Christmas crackers. The best thing in the book is *The Poet's Vision of Death*, which is quite above the average.

Mrs. Dobell informs us that she has already published sixteen volumes of poetry and that she intends to publish two more. The volume that now lies before us is entitled *In the Watches of the Night*, most of the poems that it contains having been com-

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posed 'in the neighbourhood of the sea, between the hours of ten and two o'clock.' Judging from the following extract we cannot say that we consider this a very favourable time for inspiration, at any rate in the case of Mrs. Dobell:

Were Anthony Trollope and George Eliot
Alive—which unfortunately they are not—
As regards the subject of 'quack-snubbing,' you know,
To support me I am sure they hadn't been slow—
For they, too, hated the wretched parasite
That fattens on the freshest, the most bright
Of the blossoms springing from the—Public Press!—
And that oft are flowers that even our quacks should bless!

(1) *Poor Folks' Lives.* By the Rev. Frederick Langbridge.
(Simpkin, Marshall and Co.)

(2) *Pictures in the Fire.* By George Dalziel. (Privately Printed.)

(3) *Women Must Weep.* By Professor F. Harald Williams.
(Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

(4) *Joseph and His Brethren: a Trilogy.* By Alexander Buchan.
(Digby and Long.)

(5) *God's Garden.* By Heartsease. (James Nisbet and Co.)

(6) *Voices of the Street.* By Cyrus Thornton. (Elliot Stock.)

(7) *In the Watches of the Night.* By Mrs. Horace Dobell.
(Remington and Co.)

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IV

(*Woman's World*, February 1888.)

CANUTE THE GREAT, by Michael Field, is in many respects a really remarkable work of art. Its tragic element is to be found in life, not in death; in the hero's psychological development, not in his moral declension or in any physical calamity; and the author has borrowed from modern science the idea that in the evolutionary struggle for existence the true tragedy may be that of the

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survivor. Canute, the rough generous Viking, finds himself alienated from his gods, his forefathers, his very dreams. With centuries of Pagan blood in his veins, he sets himself to the task of becoming a great Christian governor and lawgiver to men; and yet he is fully conscious that, while he has abandoned the noble impulses of his race, he still retains that which in his nature is most fierce or fearful. It is not by faith that he reaches the new creed, nor through gentleness that he seeks after the new culture. The beautiful Christian woman whom he has made queen of his life and lands teaches him no mercy, and knows nothing of forgiveness. It is sin and not suffering that purifies him—mere sin itself. 'Be not afraid,' he says in the last great scene of the play:

'Be not afraid;

I have learnt this, sin is a mighty bond
'Twixt God and man. Love that has ne'er forgiven
Is virgin and untender; spousal passion
Becomes acquainted with life's vilest things,
Transmutes them, and exalts. Oh, wonderful,
This touch of pardon,—all the shame cast out;
The heart a-ripple with the gaiety,
The leaping consciousness that Heaven knows all,
And yet esteems us royal. Think of it—
The joy, the hope!

This strange and powerful conception is worked out in a manner as strong as it is subtle; and, indeed, almost every character in the play seems to suggest some new psychological problem. The mere handling of the verse is essentially characteristic of our modern introspective method, as it presents to us, not thought in its perfected form, but the involutions of thought seeking for expression. We seem to witness the very workings of the mind, and to

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watch the passion struggling for utterance. In plays of this kind (plays that are meant to be read, not to be acted) it must be admitted that we often miss that narrative and descriptive element which in the epic is so great a charm, and, indeed, may be said to be almost essential to the perfect literary presentation of any story. This element the Greek managed to retain by the introduction of chorus and messenger; but we seem to have been unable to invent any substitute for it. That there is here a distinct loss cannot, I think, be denied. There is something harsh, abrupt, and inartistic in such a stage-direction as 'Canute strangles Edric, flings his body into the stream, and gazes out.' It strikes no dramatic note, it conveys no picture, it is meagre and inadequate. If acted it might be fine; but as read, it is unimpressive. However, there is no form of art that has not got its limitations, and though it is sad to see the action of a play relegated to a formal footnote, still there is undoubtedly a certain gain in psychological analysis and psychological concentration.

It is a far cry from the Knutlinga Saga to Rossetti's note-book, but Michael Field passes from one to the other without any loss of power. Indeed, most readers will probably prefer *The Cup of Water*, which is the second play in this volume, to the earlier historical drama. It is more purely poetical; and if it has less power, it has certainly more beauty. Rossetti conceived the idea of a story in which a young king falls passionately in love with a little peasant girl who gives him a cup of water, and is by her beloved in turn, but being betrothed to a noble lady, he yields her in marriage to his friend, on condition that once a year—on the anniversary of their

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meeting—she brings him a cup of water. The girl dies in childbirth, leaving a daughter who grows into her mother's perfect likeness, and comes to meet the king when he is hunting. Just, however, as he is about to take the cup from her hand, a second figure, in her exact likeness, but dressed in peasant's clothes, steps to her side, looks in the king's face, and kisses him on the mouth. He falls forward on his horse's neck, and is lifted up dead. Michael Field has struck out the supernatural element so characteristic of Rossetti's genius, and in some other respects modified for dramatic purposes material Rossetti left unused. The result is a poem of exquisite and pathetic grace. Cara, the peasant girl, is a creation as delicate as it is delightful, and it deserves to rank beside the Faun of *Callirhoe*. As for the young king who loses all the happiness of his life through one noble moment of unselfishness, and who recognised as he stands over Cara's dead body that

women are not chattels,
To deal with as one's generosity
May prompt or straiten, . . .

and that

we must learn
To drink life's pleasures if we would be pure,

he is one of the most romantic figures in all modern dramatic work. Looked at from a purely technical point of view, Michael Field's verse is sometimes lacking in music, and has no sustained grandeur of movement; but it is extremely dramatic, and its method is admirably suited to express those swift touches of nature and sudden flashes of thought which are Michael Field's distinguishing qualities. As for the moral contained in these plays, work

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that has the rich vitality of life has always something of life's mystery also; it cannot be narrowed down to a formal creed, nor summed up in a platitude; it has many answers, and more than one secret.

Miss Frances Martin's *Life of Elizabeth Gilbert* is an extremely interesting book. Elizabeth Gilbert was born at a time when, as her biographer reminds us, kindly and intelligent men and women could gravely implore the Almighty to 'take away' a child merely because it was blind; when they could argue that to teach the blind to read, or to attempt to teach them to work, was to fly in the face of Providence; and her whole life was given to the endeavour to overcome this prejudice and superstition; to show that blindness, though a great privation, is not necessarily a disqualification; and that blind men and women can learn, labour, and fulfil all the duties of life. Before her day all that the blind were taught was to commit texts from the Bible to memory. She saw that they could learn handicrafts, and be made industrious and self-supporting. She began with a small cellar in Holborn, at the rent of eighteenpence a week, but before her death she could point to large and well-appointed workshops in almost every city of England where blind men and women are employed, where tools have been invented by or modified for them, and where agencies have been established for the sale of their work. The whole story of her life is full of pathos and of beauty. She was not born blind, but lost her sight through an attack of scarlet fever when she was three years old. For a long time she could not realise her position, and we hear of the little child making earnest appeals to be taken 'out

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of the dark room,' or to have a candle lighted; and once she whispered to her father, 'If I am a very good little girl, may I see my doll to-morrow?' However, all memory of vision seems to have faded from her before she left the sick-room, though, taught by those around her, she soon began to take an imaginary interest in colour, and a very real one in form and texture. An old nurse is still alive who remembers making a pink frock for her when she was a child, her delight at its being pink and her pleasure in stroking down the folds; and when in 1835 the young Princess Victoria visited Oxford with her mother, Bessie, as she was always called, came running home, exclaiming, 'Oh, mamma, I have seen the Duchess of Kent, and she had on a brown silk dress.' Her youthful admiration of Wordsworth was based chiefly upon his love of flowers, but also on personal knowledge. When she was about ten years old, Wordsworth went to Oxford to receive the honorary degree of D.C.L. from the University. He stayed with Dr. Gilbert, then Principal of Brasenose, and won Bessie's heart the first day by telling at the dinner table how he had almost leapt off the coach in Bagley Wood to gather the blue veronica. But she had a better reason for remembering that visit. One day she was in the drawing-room alone, and Wordsworth entered. For a moment he stood silent before the blind child, the little sensitive face, with its wondering, inquiring look, turned towards him. Then he gravely said, 'Madam, I hope I do not disturb you.' She never forgot that 'Madam'—grave, solemn, almost reverential.

As for the great practical work of her life, the amelioration of the condition of the blind, Miss

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Martin gives a wonderful account of her noble efforts and her noble success; and the volume contains a great many interesting letters from eminent people, of which the following characteristic note from Mr. Ruskin is not the least interesting:

DENMARK HILL, 2nd September 1871.

MADAM,—I am obliged by your letter, and I deeply sympathise with the objects of the institution over which you preside. But one of my main principles of work is that every one must do their best, and spend their all in their own work, and mine is with a much lower race of sufferers than you plead for—with those who 'have eyes and see not.'—I am, Madam, your faithful servant,

J. RUSKIN.

Miss Martin is a most sympathetic biographer, and her book should be read by all who care to know the history of one of the remarkable women of our century.

Ourselves and Our Neighbours is a pleasant volume of social essays from the pen of one of the most graceful and attractive of all American poetesses, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton. Mrs. Moulton, who has a very light literary touch, discusses every important modern problem—from Society rosebuds and old bachelors, down to the latest fashions in bonnets and in sonnets. The best chapter in the book is that entitled 'The Gospel of Good Gowns,' which contains some very excellent remarks on the ethics of dress. Mrs. Moulton sums up her position in the following passage:—

The desire to please is a natural characteristic of unspoiled womanhood. 'If I lived in the woods, I should dress for the trees,' said a woman widely known for taste and for culture. Every woman's dress should be, and if she has any ideality will be, an expression of herself. . . . The true gospel of dress is that of fitness and taste. Pictures are painted, and music is written, and flowers are fostered, that life may be made beauti-

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ful. Let women delight our eyes like pictures, be harmonious as music, and fragrant as flowers, that they also may fulfil their mission of grace and of beauty. By companionship with beautiful thoughts shall their tastes be so formed that their toilets will never be out of harmony with their means or their position. They will be clothed almost as unconsciously as the lilies of the field; but each one will be herself, and there will be no more uniformity in their attire than in their faces.

The modern Dryad who is ready to 'dress for the trees' seems to me a charming type; but I hardly think that Mrs. Moulton is right when she says that the woman of the future will be clothed 'almost as unconsciously as the lilies of the field.' Possibly, however, she means merely to emphasise the distinction between dressing and dressing-up, a distinction which is often forgotten.

Warring Angels is a very sad and suggestive story. It contains no impossible heroine and no improbable hero, but is simply a faithful transcript from life, a truthful picture of men and women as they are. Darwin could not have enjoyed it, as it does not end happily. There is, at least, no distribution of cakes and ale in the last chapter. But, then, scientific people are not always the best judges of literature. They seem to think that the sole aim of art should be to amuse, and had they been consulted on the subject would have banished Melpomene from Parnassus. It may be admitted, however, that not a little of our modern art is somewhat harsh and painful. Our Castaly is very salt with tears, and we have bound the brows of the Muses with cypress and with yew. We are often told that we are a shallow age, yet we have certainly the saddest literature of all the ages, for we have made Truth and not Beauty the aim of art, and seem to value

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imitation more than imagination. This tendency is, of course, more marked in fiction than it is in poetry. Beauty of form is always in itself a source of joy; the mere *technique* of verse has an imaginative and spiritual element; and life must, to a certain degree, be transfigured before it can find its expression in music. But ordinary fiction, rejecting the beauty of form in order to realise the facts of life, seems often to lack the vital element of delight, to miss that pleasure-giving power in virtue of which the arts exist. It would not, however, be fair to regard *Warring Angels* simply as a specimen of literary photography. It has a marked distinction of style, a definite grace and simplicity of manner. There is nothing crude in it, though it is to a certain degree inexperienced; nothing violent, though it is often strong. The story it has to tell has frequently been told before, but the treatment makes it new; and Lady Flower, for whose white soul the angels of good and evil are at war, is admirably conceived, and admirably drawn.

A Song of Jubilee and Other Poems contains some pretty, picturesque verses. Its author is Mrs. De Courcy Laffan, who, under the name of Mrs. Leith Adams, is well known as a novelist and story writer. The Jubilee Ode is quite as good as most of the Jubilee Odes have been, and some of the short poems are graceful. This from *The First Butterfly* is pretty:

O little bird without a song! I love
Thy silent presence, floating in the light—
A living, perfect thing, when scarcely yet
The snow-white blossom crawls along the wall,
And not a daisy shows its star-like head
Amid the grass.

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Miss Bella Duffy's *Life of Madame de Staël* forms part of that admirable 'Eminent Women' Series, which is so well edited by Mr. John H. Ingram. There is nothing absolutely new in Miss Duffy's book, but this was not to be expected. Unpublished correspondence, that delight of the eager biographer, is not to be had in the case of Madame de Staël, the De Broglie family having either destroyed or successfully concealed all the papers which might have revealed any facts not already in the possession of the world. Upon the other hand, the book has the excellent quality of condensation, and gives us in less than two hundred pages a very good picture of Madame de Staël and her day. Miss Duffy's criticism of *Corinne* is worth quoting:

Corinne is a classic of which everybody is bound to speak with respect. The enormous admiration which it exacted at the time of its appearance may seem somewhat strange in this year of grace; but then it must be remembered that Italy was not the over-written country it has since become. Besides this, Madame de Staël was the most conspicuous personage of her day. Except Chateaubriand, she had nobody to dispute with her the palm of literary glory in France. Her exile, her literary circle, her courageous opinions, had kept the eyes of Europe fixed on her for years, so that any work from her pen was sure to excite the liveliest curiosity.

Corinne is a kind of glorified guide-book, with some of the qualities of a good novel. It is very long winded, but the appetite of the age was robust in that respect, and the highly-strung emotions of the hero and heroine could not shock a taste which had been formed by the *Sorrows of Werther*. It is extremely moral, deeply sentimental, and of a deadly earnestness—three characteristics which could not fail to recommend it to a dreary and ponderous generation, the most deficient in taste that ever trod the earth.

But it is artistic in the sense that the interest is concentrated from first to last on the central figure, and the drama,

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such as it is, unfolds itself naturally from its starting point, which is the contrast between the characters of Oswald and Corinne.

The 'dreary and ponderous generation, the most deficient in taste that ever trod the earth,' seems to me a somewhat exaggerated mode of expression, but 'glorified guide-book' is a not unfelicitous description of the novel that once thrilled Europe. Miss Duffy sums up her opinion of Madame de Staël as a writer in the following passage :

Her mind was strong of grasp and wide in range, but continuous effort fatigued it. She could strike out isolated sentences alternately brilliant, exhaustive, and profound, but she could not link them to other sentences so as to form an organic whole. Her thought was definite singly, but vague as a whole. She always saw things separately, and tried to combine them arbitrarily, and it is generally difficult to follow out any idea of hers from its origin to its end. Her thoughts are like pearls of price profusely scattered, or carelessly strung together, but not set in any design. On closing one of her books, the reader is left with no continuous impression. He has been dazzled and delighted, enlightened also by flashes; but the horizons disclosed have vanished again, and the outlook is enriched by no new vistas.

Then she was deficient in the higher qualities of the imagination. She could analyse, but not characterise; construct, but not create. She could take one defect like selfishness, or one passion like love, and display its workings; or she could describe a whole character, like Napoleon's, with marvellous penetration; but she could not make her personages talk, or act like human beings. She lacked pathos, and had no sense of humour. In short, hers was a mind endowed with enormous powers of comprehension, and an amazing richness of ideas, but deficient in perception of beauty, in poetry, and in true originality. She was a great social personage, but her influence on literature was not destined to be lasting, because, in spite of foreseeing too much, she had not the true prophetic sense of proportion,

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and confused the things of the present with those of the future—the accidental with the enduring.

I cannot but think that in this passage Miss Duffy rather underrates Madame de Staël's influence on the literature of the nineteenth century. It is true that she gave our literature no new form, but she was one of those who gave it a new spirit, and the romantic movement owes her no small debt. However, a biography should be read for its pictures more than for its criticisms, and Miss Duffy shows a remarkable narrative power, and tells with a good deal of *esprit* the wonderful adventures of the brilliant woman whom Heine termed 'a whirlwind in petticoats.'

Mr. Harcourt's reprint of John Evelyn's *Life of Mrs. Godolphin* is a welcome addition to the list of charming library books. Mr. Harcourt's grandfather, the Archbishop of York, himself John Evelyn's great-great-grandson, inherited the manuscript from his distinguished ancestor, and in 1741 entrusted it for publication to Samuel Wilberforce, then Bishop of Oxford. As the book has been for a long time out of print, this new edition is sure to awake fresh interest in the life of the noble and virtuous lady whom John Evelyn so much admired. Margaret Godolphin was one of the Queen's Maids of Honour at the Court of Charles II., and was distinguished for the delicate purity of her nature, as well as for her high intellectual attainments. Some of the extracts Evelyn gives from her Diary seem to show an austere, formal, almost ascetic spirit; but it was inevitable that a nature so refined as hers should have turned in horror from such ideals of life as were presented by men like Buckingham

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LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

and Rochester, like Etheridge, Killigrew, and Sedley, like the King himself, to whom she could scarcely bring herself to speak. After her marriage she seems to have become happier and brighter, and her early death makes her a pathetic and interesting figure in the history of the time. Evelyn can see no fault in her, and his life of her is the most wonderful of all panegyrics.

Amongst the Maids-of-Honour mentioned by John Evelyn is Frances Jennings, the elder sister of the great Duchess of Marlborough. Miss Jennings, who was one of the most beautiful women of her day, married first Sir George Hamilton, brother of the author of the *Mémoires de Grammont*, and afterwards Richard Talbot, who was made Duke of Tyrconnel by James II. William's successful occupation of Ireland, where her husband was Lord Deputy, reduced her to poverty and obscurity, and she was probably the first Peeress who ever took to millinery as a livelihood. She had a dress-maker's shop in the Strand, and, not wishing to be detected, sat in a white mask and a white dress, and was known by the name of the 'White Widow.'

I was reminded of the Duchess when I read Miss Emily Faithfull's admirable article in *Galvani* on 'Ladies as Shopkeepers.' 'The most daring innovation in England at this moment,' says Miss Faithfull, 'is the lady shopkeeper. At present but few people have had the courage to brave the current social prejudice. We draw such fine distinctions between the wholesale and retail traders that our cotton-spinners, calico-makers, and general merchants seem to think that they belong to a totally different sphere, from which they look down on the lady who

REVIEWS

has had sufficient brains, capital, and courage to open a shop. But the old world moves faster than it did in former days, and before the end of the nineteenth century it is probable that a gentlewoman will be recognised in spite of her having entered on commercial pursuits, especially as we are growing accustomed to see scions of our noblest families on our Stock Exchange and in tea-merchants' houses; one Peer of the realm is now doing an extensive business in coals, and another is a cab proprietor.' Miss Faithfull then proceeds to give a most interesting account of the London dairy opened by the Hon. Mrs. Maberley, of Madame Isabel's millinery establishment, and of the wonderful work done by Miss Charlotte Robinson, who has recently been appointed Decorator to the Queen. About three years ago, Miss Faithfull tells us, Miss Robinson came to Manchester, and opened a shop in King Street, and, regardless of that bugbear which terrifies most women—the loss of social status—she put up her own name over the door, and without the least self-assertion quietly entered into competition with the sterner sex. The result has been eminently satisfactory. This year Miss Robinson has exhibited at Saltaire and at Manchester, and next year she proposes to exhibit at Glasgow, and, possibly, at Brussels. At first she had some difficulty in making people understand that her work is really commercial, not charitable; she feels that, until a healthy public opinion is created, women will pose as 'destitute ladies,' and never take a dignified position in any calling they adopt. Gentlemen who earn their own living are not spoken of as 'destitute,' and we must banish this idea in connection with ladies who are engaged

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LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

in an equally honourable manner. Miss Faithfull concludes her most valuable article as follows: 'The more highly educated our women of business are, the better for themselves, their work, and the whole community. Many of the professions to which ladies have hitherto turned are overcrowded, and when once the fear of losing social position is boldly disregarded, it will be found that commercial life offers a variety of more or less lucrative employments to ladies of birth and capital, who find it more congenial to their tastes and requirements to invest their money and spend their energies in a business which yields a fair return rather than sit at home content with a scanty pittance.'

I myself entirely agree with Miss Faithfull, though I feel that there is something to be said in favour of the view put forward by Lady Shrewsbury in the *Woman's World*,¹ and a great deal to be said in favour of Mrs. Joyce's scheme for emigration. Mr. Walter Besant, if we are to judge from his last novel, is of Lady Shrewsbury's way of thinking.

I hope that some of my readers will be interested in Miss Beatrice Crane's little poem, *Blush-Roses*, for which her father, Mr. Walter Crane, has done so lovely and graceful a design. Mrs. Simon, of Birkdale Park, Southport, tells me that she offered a prize last term at her school for the best sonnet on any work of art. The poems were sent to Professor Dowden, who awarded the prize to the youthful authoress of the following sonnet on Mr. Watts's picture of *Hope*:

She sits with drooping form and fair bent head,
Low-bent to hear the faintly-sounding strain

¹ February 1888.

REVIEWS

That thrills her with the sweet uncertain pain
Of timid trust and restful tears unshed.
Around she feels vast spaces. Awe and dread
Encompass her. And the dark doubt she fain
Would banish, sees the shuddering fear remain,
And ever presses near with stealthy tread.

But not for ever will the misty space
Close down upon her meekly-patient eyes.
The steady light within them soon will ope
Their heavy lids, and then the sweet fair face,
Uplifted in a sudden glad surprise,
Will find the bright reward which comes to Hope.

I myself am rather inclined to prefer this sonnet on Mr. Watts's *Psyche*. The sixth line is deficient; but, in spite of the faulty *technique*, there is a great deal that is suggestive in it:

Unfathomable boundless mystery,
Last work of the Creator, deathless, vast,
Soul—essence moulded of a changeful past;
Thou art the offspring of Eternity;
Breath of his breath, by his vitality
Engendered, in his image cast,
Part of the Nature-song whereof the last
Chord soundeth never in the harmony.
'Psyche'! Thy form is shadowed o'er with pain
Born of intensest longing, and the rain
Of a world's weeping lieth like a sea
Of silent soundless sorrow in thine eyes.
Yet grief is not eternal, for clouds rise
From out the ocean everlastingly.

I have to thank Mr. William Rossetti for kindly allowing me to reproduce Dante Gabriel Rossetti's drawing of the authoress of *Goblin Market*; and thanks are also due to Mr. Lafayette, of Dublin, for the use of his photograph of H.R.H. the Princess of Wales in her Academic Robes as Doctor of Music, which served as our frontispiece last month, and to Messrs. Hills and Saunders, of Oxford, and

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THE POETS' CORNER

Mr. Lord and Mr. Blanchard, of Cambridge, for a similar courtesy in the case of the article on *Greek Plays at the Universities*.

- (1) *Canute the Great*. By Michael Field. (Bell and Sons.)
- (2) *Life of Elizabeth Gilbert*. By Frances Martin. (Macmillan and Co.)
- (3) *Ourselves and Our Neighbours*. By Louise Chandler Moulton. (Ward and Downey.)
- (4) *Warring Angels*. (Fisher Unwin.)
- (5) *A Song of Jubilee and Other Poems*. By Mrs. De Courcy Laiffan. (Kegan Paul.)
- (6) *Life of Madame de Staël*. By Bella Duffy. 'Eminent Women' Series.
- (7) *Life of Mrs. Godolphin*. By John Evelyn, Esq., of Wooton. Edited by William Harcourt of Nuneham. (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER

v

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 15, 1888.)

MR. HEYWOOD'S *Salome* seems to have thrilled the critics of the United States. From a collection of press notices prefixed to the volume we learn that *Putnam's Magazine* has found in it 'the simplicity and grace of naked Grecian statues,' and that Dr. Jos. G. Cogswell, LL.D., has declared that it will live to be appreciated 'as long as the English language endures.' Remembering that prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error, we will not attempt to argue with Dr. Jos. G. Cogswell, LL.D., but will content ourselves with protesting against such a detestable expression as 'naked Grecian statues.' If this be the literary style of the future the English language will not endure very long. As for the poem itself, the best that one can say of it is that it is a triumph of conscientious

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industry. From an artistic point of view it is a very commonplace production indeed, and we must protest against such blank verse as the following:

From the hour I saw her first, I was entranced,
Or embosomed in a charmed world, circumscribed
By its proper circumambient atmosphere,
Herself its centre, and wide pervading spirit.
The air all beauty of colour held dissolved,
And tints distilled as dew are shed by heaven.

Mr. Griffiths' *Sonnets and Other Poems* are very simple, which is a good thing, and very sentimental, which is a thing not quite so good. As a general rule, his verse is full of pretty echoes of other writers, but in one sonnet he makes a distinct attempt to be original and the result is extremely depressing.

Earth wears her grandest robe, by autumn spun,
Like some stout matron who of youth has run
The course, . . .

is the most dreadful simile we have ever come across even in poetry. Mr. Griffiths should beware of originality. Like beauty, it is a fatal gift.

Imitators of Mr. Browning are, unfortunately, common enough, but imitators of Mr. and Mrs. Browning combined are so very rare that we have read Mr. Francis Prevost's *Fires of Green Wood* with great interest. Here is a curious reproduction of the manner of *Aurora Leigh*:

But Spring! that part at least our unchaste eyes
Infer from some wind-blown philactery,
(It wears its breast bare also)—chestnut buds,
Pack'd in white wool as though sent here from heaven,
Stretching wild stems to reach each climbing lark
That shouts against the fading stars.

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THE POETS' CORNER

And here is a copy of Mr. Browning's mannerisms. We do not like it quite so well:

If another
Save all bother,
Hold that perhaps loaves grow like parsnips:
Call the baker
Heaven's care-taker,
Live, die; Death may show him where the farce nips.
Not I; truly
He may duly
Into church or church-day shunt God;
Chink his pocket,
Win your locket;—
Down we go together to confront God.

Yet, in spite of these ingenious caricatures there are some good poems, or perhaps we should say some good passages, in Mr. Prevost's volume. *The Whitening of the Thorn-tree*, for instance, opens admirably, and is, in some respects, a rather remarkable story. We have no doubt that some day Mr. Prevost will be able to study the great masters without stealing from them.

Mr. John Cameron Grant has christened himself 'England's Empire Poet,' and, lest we should have any doubts upon the subject, tells us that he 'dare not lie,' a statement which in a poet seems to show a great want of courage. Protection and Paper-Unionism are the gods of Mr. Grant's idolatry, and his verse is full of such fine fallacies and masterly misrepresentations that he should be made Laureate to the Primrose League at once. Such a stanza as—

Ask the ruined Sugar-worker if he loves the foreign beet—
Rather, one can hear him answer, would I see my children eat—

would thrill any Tory tea-party in the provinces, and it would be difficult for the advocates of

REVIEWS

Coercion to find a more appropriate or a more characteristic peroration for a stump speech than

We have not to do with justice, right depends on point of view,
The one question for our thought is, what's our neighbour
going to do.

The hymn to the Union Jack, also, would make a capital leaflet for distribution in boroughs where the science of heraldry is absolutely unknown, and the sonnet on Mr. Gladstone is sure to be popular with all who admire violence and vulgarity in literature. It is quite worthy of 'Thersites at his best.

Mr. Evans's *Cæsar Borgia* is a very tedious tragedy. Some of the passages are in the true 'Ercles' vein,' like the following:

CÆSAR (starting up).

Help, Michelotto, help! Begone! Begone!
Fiends! torments! devils! Gandia! What, Gandia?
O turn those staring eyes away. See! See
He bleeds to death! O fly! Who are those fiends
That tug me by the throat? O! O! O! O! (Pauses.)

But, as a rule, the style is of a more commonplace character. The other poems in the volume are comparatively harmless, though it is sad to find Shakespeare's 'Bacchus with pink eyne' reappearing as 'pinky-eyed Silenus.'

The Cross and the Grail is a collection of poems on the subject of temperance. Compared to real poetry these verses are as 'water unto wine,' but no doubt this was the effect intended. The illustrations are quite dreadful, especially one of an angel appearing to a young man from Chicago who seems to be drinking brown sherry.

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THE POETS' CORNER

are two fierce social satires and, like most satires, they are the product of the corruption they pillory. The first is written on a very convenient principle. Blank spaces are left for the names of the victims and these the reader can fill up as he wishes.

Must — bluster, — give the lie,
— wear the night out, — sneer!

is an example of this anonymous method. It does not seem to us very effective. *The Excellent Mystery* is much better. It is full of clever epigrammatic lines, and its wit fully atones for its bitterness. It is hardly a poem to quote but it is certainly a poem to read.

The Chronicle of Mites is a mock-heroic poem about the inhabitants of a decaying cheese who speculate about the origin of their species and hold learned discussions upon the meaning of evolution and the Gospel according to Darwin. This cheese-epic is a rather unsavoury production and the style is at times so monstrous and so realistic that the author should be called the Gorgon-Zola of literature.

(1) *Salome*. By J. C. Heywood. (Kegan Paul.)

(2) *Sonnets and Other Poems*. By William Griffiths. (Digby and Long.)

(3) *Fires of Green Wood*. By Francis Prevost. (Kegan Paul.)

(4) *Vanclyn and Other Verses*. By John Cameron Grant. (E. W. Allen.)

(5) *Cæsar Borgia*. By W. Evans, M.A. (William Maxwell and Son.)

(6) *The Cross and the Grail*. (Women's Temperance Association, Chicago.)

(7) *Juvenal in Piccadilly*. By Oxoniensis. (Vizetelly and Co.)

(8) *The Excellent Mystery: A Matrimonial Satire*. By Lord Pamlico. (Vizetelly and Co.)

(9) *The Chronicle of Mites*. By James Aitchison. (Kegan Paul.)

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VENUS OR VICTORY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 24, 1888.)

THERE are certain problems in archæology that seem to possess a real romantic interest, and foremost among these is the question of the so-called Venus of Melos. Who is she, this marble mutilated goddess whom Gautier loved, to whom Heine bent his knee? What sculptor wrought her, and for what shrine? Whose hands walled her up in that rude niche where the Melian peasant found her? What symbol of her divinity did she carry? Was it apple of gold or shield of bronze? Where is her city and what was her name among gods and men? The last writer on this fascinating subject is Mr. Stillman, who in a most interesting book recently published in America, claims that the work of art in question is no sea-born and foam-born Aphrodite, but the very Victory Without Wings that once stood in the little chapel outside the gates of the Acropolis at Athens. So long ago as 1826, that is to say six years after the discovery of the statue, the Venus hypothesis was violently attacked by Millingen, and from that time to this the battle of the archæologists has never ceased. Mr. Stillman, who fights, of course, under Millingen's banner, points out that the statue is not of the Venus type at all, being far too heroic in character to correspond to the Greek conception of Aphrodite at any period of their artistic development, but that it agrees distinctly with certain well-known statues of Victory, such as the celebrated 'Victory of Brescia.' The latter is in bronze, is later, and has the wings, but the type is unmistakable, and though not a reproduction it is certainly a recollection of the Melian statue.

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VENUS OR VICTORY

The representation of Victory on the coin of Agathocles is also obviously of the Melian type, and in the museum of Naples is a terra-cotta Victory in almost the identical action and drapery. As for Dumont d'Urville's statement that, when the statue was discovered, one hand held an apple and the other a fold of the drapery, the latter is obviously a mistake, and the whole evidence on the subject is so contradictory that no reliance can be placed on the statement made by the French Consul and the French naval officers, none of whom seems to have taken the trouble to ascertain whether the arm and hand now in the Louvre were really found in the same niche as the statue at all. At any rate, these fragments seem to be of extremely inferior workmanship, and they are so imperfect that they are quite worthless as data for measure or opinion. So far, Mr. Stillman is on old ground. His real artistic discovery is this. In working about the Acropolis of Athens, some years ago, he photographed among other sculptures the mutilated Victories in the Temple of Nikè Apteros, the 'Wingless Victory,' the little Ionic temple in which stood that statue of Victory of which it was said that *'the Athenians made her without wings that she might never leave Athens.'* Looking over the photographs afterwards, when the impression of the comparatively diminutive size had passed, he was struck with the close resemblance of the type to that of the Melian statue. Now, this resemblance is so striking that it cannot be questioned by any one who has an eye for form. There are the same large heroic proportions, the same ampleness of physical development, and the same treatment of drapery, and there is also that perfect spiritual kinship which, to any true anti-

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quarian, is one of the most valuable modes of evidence. Now it is generally admitted on both sides that the Melian statue is probably Attic in its origin, and belongs certainly to the period between Phidias and Praxiteles, that is to say, to the age of Scopas, if it be not actually the work of Scopas himself; and as it is to Scopas that these bas-reliefs have been always attributed, the similarity of style can, on Mr. Stillman's hypothesis, be easily accounted for.

As regards the appearance of the statue in Melos, Mr. Stillman points out that Melos belonged to Athens as late as she had any Greek allegiance, and that it is probable that the statue was sent there for concealment on the occasion of some siege or invasion. When this took place, Mr. Stillman does not pretend to decide with any degree of certainty, but it is evident that it must have been subsequent to the establishment of the Roman hegemony, as the brickwork of the niche in which the statue was found is clearly Roman in character, and before the time of Pausanias and Pliny, as neither of these antiquaries mentions the statue. Accepting, then, the statue as that of the Victory Without Wings, Mr. Stillman agrees with Millingen in supposing that in her left hand she held a bronze shield, the lower rim of which rested on the left knee where some marks of the kind are easily recognisable, while with her right hand she traced, or had just finished tracing, the names of the great heroes of Athens. Valentin's objection, that if this were so the left thigh would incline outwards so as to secure a balance, Mr. Stillman meets partly by the analogy of the Victory of Brescia and partly by the evidence of Nature herself; for he has had a model photographed in the same position as

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VENUS OR VICTORY

the statue and holding a shield in the manner he proposes in his restoration. The result is precisely the contrary to that which Valentin assumes. Of course, Mr. Stillman's solution of the whole matter must not be regarded as an absolutely scientific demonstration. It is simply an induction in which a kind of artistic instinct, not communicable or equally valuable to all people, has had the greatest part, but to this mode of interpretation archaeologists as a class have been far too indifferent; and it is certain that in the present case it has given us a theory which is most fruitful and suggestive.

The little temple of Nikè Apteros has had, as Mr. Stillman reminds us, a destiny unique of its kind. Like the Parthenon, it was standing little more than two hundred years ago, but during the Turkish occupation it was razed, and its stones all built into the great bastion which covered the front of the Acropolis and blocked up the staircase to the Propylæa. It was dug out and restored, nearly every stone in its place, by two German architects during the reign of Otho, and it stands again just as Pausanias described it on the spot where old Ægeus watched for the return of Theseus from Crete. In the distance are Salamis and Ægina, and beyond the purple hills lies Marathon. If the Melian statue be indeed the Victory Without Wings, she had no unworthy shrine.

There are some other interesting essays in Mr. Stillman's book on the wonderful topographical knowledge of Ithaca displayed in the *Odyssey*, and discussions of this kind are always interesting as long as there is no attempt to represent Homer as the ordinary literary man; but the article on the Melian statue is by far the most important and the most

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delightful. Some people will, no doubt, regret the possibility of the disappearance of the old name, and as Venus not as Victory will still worship the stately goddess, but there are others who will be glad to see in her the image and ideal of that spiritual enthusiasm to which Athens owed her liberty, and by which alone can liberty be won.

On the Track of Ulysses ; together with an Excursion in Quest of the So-called Venus of Melos. By W. J. Stillman. (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston.)

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

V

(*Women's World*, March 1888.)

THE Princess Emily Ruete of Oman and Zanzibar, whose efforts to introduce women doctors into the East are so well known, has just published a most interesting account of her life, under the title of *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess*. The Princess is the daughter of the celebrated Sejid Saïd, Imam of Mesket and Sultan of Zanzibar, and her long residence in Germany has given her the opportunity of comparing Eastern with Western civilisation. She writes in a very simple and unaffected manner ; and though she has many grievances against her brother, the present Sultan (who seems never to have forgiven her for her conversion to Christianity and her marriage with a German subject), she has too much tact, *esprit*, and good humour to trouble her readers with any dreary record of family quarrels and domestic differences. Her book throws a great deal of light on the question of the position of women in the East, and shows that much of what has been written on this subject is quite inaccurate. One of the most curious

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LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

passages is that in which the Princess gives an account of her mother :

My mother was a Circassian by birth, who in early youth had been torn away from her home. Her father had been a farmer, and she had always lived peacefully with her parents and her little brother and sister. War broke out suddenly, and the country was overrun by marauding bands. On their approach, the family fled into an underground place, as my mother called it—she probably meant a cellar, which is not known in Zanzibar. Their place of refuge was, however, invaded by a merciless horde, the parents were slain, and the children carried off by three mounted Arnauts.

She came into my father's possession when quite a child, probably at the tender age of seven or eight years, as she cast her first tooth in our house. She was at once adopted as playmate by two of my sisters, her own age, with whom she was educated and brought up. Together with them she learnt to read, which raised her a good deal above her equals, who, as a rule, became members of our family at the age of sixteen or eighteen years, or older still, when they had outgrown whatever taste they might once have had for schooling. She could scarcely be called pretty; but she was tall and shapely, had black eyes, and hair down to her knees. Of a very gentle disposition, her greatest pleasure consisted in assisting other people, in looking after and nursing any sick person in the house; and I well remember her going about with her books from one patient to another, reading prayers to them.

She was in great favour with my father, who never refused her anything, though she interceded mostly for others; and when she came to see him, he always rose to meet her half-way—a distinction he conferred but very rarely. She was as kind and pious as she was modest, and in all her dealings frank and open. She had another daughter besides myself, who had died quite young. Her mental powers were not great, but she was very clever at needlework. She had always been a tender and loving mother to me, but this did not hinder her from punishing me severely when she deemed it necessary.

She had many friends at Bet-il-Mtoni, which is rarely to be met with in an Arab harem. She had the most unshaken and firmest trust in God. When I was about five years old,

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I remember a fire breaking out in the stables close by, one night while my father was at his city residence. A false alarm spread over the house that we, too, were in imminent danger; upon which the good woman hastened to take me on her arm, and her big kurân (we pronounce the word thus) on the other, and hurried into the open air. On the rest of her possessions she set no value in this hour of danger.

Here is a description of Schesade, the Sultan's second legitimate wife:

She was a Persian Princess of entrancing beauty, and of inordinate extravagance. Her little retinue was composed of one hundred and fifty cavaliers, all Persians, who lived on the ground floor; with them she hunted and rode in the broad day—rather contrary to Arab notions. The Persian women are subjected to quite a Spartan training in bodily exercise; they enjoy great liberty, much more so than Arab women, but they are also more rude in mind and action.

Schesade is said to have carried on her extravagant style of life beyond bounds; her dresses, cut always after the Persian fashion, were literally covered with embroideries of pearls. A great many of these were picked up nearly every morning by the servants in her rooms, where she had dropped them from her garments, but the Princess would never take any of these precious jewels back again. She did not only drain my father's exchequer most wantonly, but violated many of our sacred laws; in fact, she had only married him for his high station and wealth, and had loved some one else all the time. Such a state of things could, of course, only end in a divorce; fortunately Schesade had no children of her own. There is a rumour still current among us that beautiful Schesade was observed, some years after this event, when my father carried on war in Persia, and had the good fortune of taking the fortress of Bender Abbâs on the Persian Gulf, heading her troops, and taking aim at the members of our family herself.

Another of the remarkable women mentioned by the Princess was her stepmother, Azze-bint-Zef, who seems to have completely ruled the Sultan, and to have settled all questions of home and foreign

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policy; while her great-aunt, the Princess Asche, was regent of the empire during the Sultan's minority, and was the heroine of the siege of Mesket. Of her the Princess gives the following account:

Dressed in man's clothes, she inspected the outposts herself at night, she watched and encouraged the soldiers in all exposed places, and was saved several times only by the speed of her horse in unforeseen attacks. One night she rode out, oppressed with care, having just received information that the enemy was about to attempt an entrance into the city by means of bribery that night, and with intent to massacre all; and now she went to convince herself of the loyalty of her troops. Very cautiously she rode up to a guard, requesting to speak to the 'Akid' (the officer in charge), and did all in her power to seduce him from his duty by great offers of reward on the part of the besiegers. The indignation of the brave man, however, completely allayed her fears as to the fidelity of the troops, but the experiment nearly cost her her own life. The soldiers were about to massacre the supposed spy on the spot, and it required all her presence of mind to make good her escape.

The situation grew, however, to be very critical at Mesket. Famine at last broke out, and the people were well-nigh distracted, as no assistance or relief could be expected from without. It was therefore decided to attempt a last sortie in order to die at least with glory. There was just sufficient powder left for one more attack, but there was no more lead for either guns or muskets. In this emergency the regent ordered iron nails and pebbles to be used in place of balls. The guns were loaded with all the old iron and brass that could be collected, and she opened her treasury to have bullets made out of her own silver dollars. Every nerve was strained, and the sally succeeded beyond all hope. The enemy was completely taken by surprise and fled in all directions, leaving more than half their men dead and wounded on the field. Mesket was saved, and, delivered out of her deep distress, the brave woman knelt down on the battlefield and thanked God in fervent prayer.

From that time her Government was a peaceful one, and she ruled so wisely that she was able to transfer to her nephew,

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my father, an empire so unimpaired as to place him in a position to extend the empire by the conquest of Zanzibar. It is to my great-aunt, therefore, that we owe, and not to an inconsiderable degree, the acquisition of this second empire.

She, too, was an Eastern woman!

All through her book the Princess protests against the idea that Oriental women are degraded or oppressed, and in the following passage she points out how difficult it is for foreigners to get any real information on the subject:

The education of the children is left entirely to the mother, whether she be legitimate wife or purchased slave, and it constitutes her chief happiness. Some fashionable mothers in Europe shift this duty on to the nurse, and, by-and-by, on the governess, and are quite satisfied with looking up their children, or receiving their visits, once a day. In France the child is sent to be nursed in the country, and left to the care of strangers. An Arab mother, on the other hand, looks continually after her children. She watches and nurses them with the greatest affection, and never leaves them as long as they may stand in need of her motherly care, for which she is rewarded by the fondest filial love.

If foreigners had more frequent opportunities to observe the cheerfulness, the exuberance of spirits even, of Eastern women, they would soon and more easily be convinced of the untruth of all those stories afloat about the degraded, oppressed, and listless state of their life. It is impossible to gain a true insight into the actual domesticity in a few moments' visit; and the conversation carried on, on those formal occasions, hardly deserves that name; there is barely more than the exchange of a few commonplace remarks—and it is questionable if even these have been correctly interpreted.

Notwithstanding his innate hospitality, the Arab has the greatest possible objection to having his home pried into by those of another land and creed. Whenever, therefore, a European lady called on us, the enormous circumference of her hoops (which were the fashion then, and took up the entire width of the stairs) was the first thing to strike us dumb with wonder; after which, the very meagre conversation generally

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confined itself on both sides to the mysteries of different costumes; and the lady retired as wise as she was when she came, after having been sprinkled over with attar of roses, and being the richer for some parting presents. It is true she had entered a harem; she had seen the much-pitied Oriental ladies (though only through their veils); she had with her own eyes seen our dresses, our jewellery, the nimbleness with which we sat down on the floor—and that was all. She could not boast of having seen more than any other foreign lady who had called before her. She is conducted upstairs and downstairs, and is watched all the time. Rarely she sees more than the reception-room, and more rarely still can she guess or find out who the veiled lady is with whom she conversed. In short, she has had no opportunity whatsoever of learning anything of domestic life, or the position of Eastern women.

No one who is interested in the social position of women in the East should fail to read these pleasantly-written memoirs. The Princess is herself a woman of high culture, and the story of her life is as instructive as history and as fascinating as fiction.

Mrs. Oliphant's *Makers of Venice* is an admirable literary pendant to the same writer's charming book on Florence, though there is a wide difference between the beautiful Tuscan city and the sea-city of the Adriatic. Florence, as Mrs. Oliphant points out, is a city full of memories of the great figures of the past. The traveller cannot pass along her streets without treading in the very traces of Dante, without stepping on soil made memorable by footprints never to be effaced. The greatness of the surroundings, the palaces, churches, and frowning mediæval castles in the midst of the city, are all thrown into the background by the greatness, the individuality, the living power and vigour of the men who are their originators, and at the same time their inspiring soul. But when we turn to Venice the effect is

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very different. We do not think of the makers of that marvellous city, but rather of what they made. The idealised image of Venice herself meets us everywhere. The mother is not overshadowed by the too great glory of any of her sons. In her records the city is everything—the republic, the worshipped ideal of a community in which every man for the common glory seems to have been willing to sink his own. We know that Dante stood within the red walls of the arsenal, and saw the galleys making and mending, and the pitch flaming up to heaven; Petrarch came to visit the great Mistress of the Sea, taking refuge there, 'in this city, true home of the human race,' from trouble, war and pestilence outside; and Byron, with his facile enthusiasms and fervent eloquence, made his home for a time in one of the stately, decaying palaces; but with these exceptions no great poet has ever associated himself with the life of Venice. She had architects, sculptors and painters, but no singer of her own. The arts through which she gave her message to the world were visible and imitative. Mrs. Oliphant, in her bright, picturesque style, tells the story of Venice pleasantly and well. Her account of the two Bellinis is especially charming; and the chapters on Titian and Tintoret are admirably written. She concludes her interesting and useful history with the following words, which are well worthy of quotation, though I must confess that the 'alien modernisms' trouble me not a little:

The critics of recent days have had much to say as to the deterioration of Venice in her new activity, and the introduction of alien modernisms, in the shape of steamboats and other new industrial agents, into her canals and lagoons. But in this adoption of every new development of power, Venice is only

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proving herself the most faithful representative of the vigorous republic of old. Whatever prejudice or angry love may say, we cannot doubt that the Michiels, the Dandolo, the Foscari, the great rulers who formed Venice, had steamboats existed in their day, serving their purpose better than their barges and *peati*, would have adopted them without hesitation, without a thought of what any critics might say. The wonderful new impulse which has made Italy a great power has justly put strength and life before those old traditions of beauty, which made her not only the 'woman country' of Europe, but a sort of Odalisque trading upon her charms, rather than the nursing mother of a noble and independent nation. That in her recoil from that somewhat degrading position, she may here and there have proved too regardless of the claims of antiquity, we need not attempt to deny; the new spring of life in her is too genuine and great to keep her entirely free from this evident danger. But it is strange that any one who loves Italy, and sincerely rejoices in her amazing resurrection, should fail to recognise how venial is this fault.

Miss Mabel Robinson's last novel, *The Plan of Campaign*, is a very powerful study of modern political life. As a concession to humanity, each of the politicians is made to fall in love, and the charm of their various romances fully atones for the soundness of the author's theory of rent. Miss Robinson dissects, describes, and discourses with keen scientific insight and minute observation. Her style, though somewhat lacking in grace, is, at its best, simple and strong. Richard Talbot and Elinor Fetherston are admirably conceived and admirably drawn, and the whole account of the murder of Lord Roeglass is most dramatic.

A Year in Eden, by Harriet Waters Preston, is a chronicle of New England life, and is full of the elaborate subtlety of the American school of fiction. The Eden in question is the little village of Pierpont, and the Eve of this provincial paradise is a beautiful

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girl called Monza Middleton, a fascinating, fearless creature, who brings ruin and misery on all who love her. Miss Preston writes an admirable prose style, and the minor characters in the book are wonderfully lifelike and true.

The Englishwoman's Year-Book contains a really extraordinary amount of useful information on every subject connected with woman's work. In the census taken in 1831 (six years before the Queen ascended the Throne), no occupation whatever was specified as appertaining to women, except that of domestic service; but in the census of 1881, the number of occupations mentioned as followed by women is upwards of three hundred and thirty. The most popular occupations seem to be those of domestic service, school teaching, and dressmaking; the lowest numbers on the list are those of bankers, gardeners, and persons engaged in scientific pursuits. Besides these, the *Year-Book* makes mention of stockbroking and conveyancing as professions that women are beginning to adopt. The historical account of the literary work done by Englishwomen in this century, as given in the *Year-Book*, is curiously inadequate, and the list of women's magazines is not complete, but in all other respects the publication seems a most useful and excellent one.

Wordsworth, in one of his interesting letters to Lady Beaumont, says that it is 'an awful truth that there neither is nor can be any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live or wish to live in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society,' adding that the mission of poetry is 'to console the

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afflicted ; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier ; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous.' I am, however, rather disposed to think that the age in which we live is one that has a very genuine enjoyment of poetry, though we may no longer agree with Wordsworth's ideas on the subject of the poet's proper mission ; and it is interesting to note that this enjoyment manifests itself by creation even more than by criticism. To realise the popularity of the great poets, one should turn to the minor poets and see whom they follow, what master they select, whose music they echo. At present, there seems to be a reaction in favour of Lord Tennyson, if we are to judge by *Rachel and Other Poems*, which is a rather remarkable little volume in its way. The poem that gives its title to the book is full of strong lines and good images ; and, in spite of its Tennysonian echoes, there is something attractive in such verses as the following :

Day by day along the Orient faintly glows the tender dawn ;
Day by day the pearly dewdrops tremble on the upland lawn :
Day by day the star of morning pales before the coming ray,
And the first faint streak of radiance brightens to the perfect day.
Day by day the rosebud gathers to itself, from earth and sky,
Fragrant stores and ampler beauty, lovelier form and deeper dye :
Day by day a richer crimson mantles in its glowing breast—
Every golden hour conferring some sweet grace that crowns the rest.
And thou canst not tell the moment when the day ascends her throne,
When the morning star hath vanished, and the rose is fully blown.
So each day fulfils its purpose, calm, unresting, strong, and sure,
Moving onward to completion, doth the work of God endure.
How unlike man's toil and hurry ! how unlike the noise, the strife,
All the pain of incompleteness, all the weariness of life !

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Ye look upward and take courage. He who leads the golden hours,
Feeds the birds, and clothes the lily, made these human hearts of ours:
Knows their need, and will supply it, manna falling day by day,
Bread from heaven, and food of angels, all along the desert way.

The Secretary of the International Technical College at Bedford has issued a most interesting prospectus of the aims and objects of the Institution. The College seems to be intended chiefly for ladies who have completed their ordinary course of English studies, and it will be divided into two departments, Educational and Industrial. In the latter, classes will be held for various decorative and technical arts, and for wood-carving, etching, and photography, as well as sick-nursing, dressmaking, cookery, physiology, poultry-rearing, and the cultivation of flowers. The curriculum certainly embraces a wonderful amount of subjects, and I have no doubt that the College will supply a real want.

The Ladies' Employment Society has been so successful that it has moved to new premises in Park Street, Grosvenor Square, where there are some very pretty and useful things for sale. The children's smocks are quite charming, and seem very inexpensive. The subscription to the Society is one guinea a year, and a commission of five per cent. is charged on each thing sold.

Miss May Morris, whose exquisite needle-work is well known, has just completed a pair of curtains for a house in Boston. They are amongst the most perfect specimens of modern embroidery that I have seen, and are from Miss Morris's own design. I am glad to hear that Miss Morris has determined to give lessons in embroidery. She has a thorough know-

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led, e of the art, her sense of beauty is as rare as it is refined, and her power of design is quite remarkable.

Mrs. Jopling's life-classes for ladies have been such a success that a similar class has been started in Chelsea by Mr. Clegg Wilkinson at the Carlyle Studios, King's Road. Mr. Wilkinson (who is a very brilliant young painter) is strongly of opinion that life should be studied from life itself, and not from that abstract presentation of life which we find in Greek marbles—a position which I have always held very strongly myself.

(1) *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess*. By the Princess Emily Ruete of Oman and Zanzibar. (Ward and Downey.)

(2) *Makers of Venice*. By Mrs. Oliphant. (Macmillan and Co.)

(3) *The Plan of Campaign*. By Mabel Robinson. (Vizetelly and Co.)

(4) *A Year in Eden*. By Harriet Waters Preston. (Fisher Unwin.)

(5) *The Englishwoman's Year-Book*, 1888. (Hatchards.)

(6) *Rachel and Other Poems*. (Cornish Brothers.)

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VI

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 6, 1888.)

DAVID WESTREN, by Mr. Alfred Hayes, is a long narrative poem in Tennysonian blank verse, a sort of serious novel set to music. It is somewhat lacking in actuality, and the picturesque style in which it is written rather contributes to this effect, lending the story beauty but robbing it of truth. Still, it is not without power, and cultured verse is certainly a pleasanter medium for story-telling than coarse and common prose. The hero of the poem is a young clergyman of the muscular Christian school:

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A lover of good cheer; a bubbling source
Of jest and tale; a monarch of the gun;
A dreaded tyrant of the darting trout
Than that bright bird whose azure lightning threads
The brooklet's bowery windings; the red fox
Did well to seek the boulder-strewn hill-side,
When Westren cheered her dappled foes; the otter
Had cause to rue the dawn when Westren's form
Loomed through the streaming bracken, to waylay
Her late return from plunder, the rough pack
Barking a jealous welcome round their friend.

One day he meets on the river a lovely girl who
is angling, and helps her to land

A gallant fish, all flashing in the sun
In silver mail inlaid with scarlet gems,
His back thick-sprinkled as a leopard's hide
With rich brown spots, and belly of bright gold.

They naturally fall in love with each other and marry, and for many years David Westren leads a perfectly happy life. Suddenly calamity comes upon him, his wife and children die and he finds himself alone and desolate. Then begins his struggle. Like Job, he cries out against the injustice of things, and his own personal sorrow makes him realise the sorrow and misery of the world. But the answer that satisfied Job does not satisfy him. He finds no comfort in contemplating Leviathan:

As if we lacked reminding of brute force,
As if we never felt the clumsy hoof,
As if the bulk of twenty million whales
Were worth one pleading soul, or all the laws
That rule the lifeless suns could soothe the sense
Of outrage in a loving human heart!
Sublime? majestic? Ay, but when our trust
Totters, and faith is shattered to the base,
Grand words will not uprear it.

Mr. Hayes states the problem of life extremely well, but his solution is sadly inadequate both from

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a psychological and from a dramatic point of view. David Westren ultimately becomes a mild Unitarian, a sort of pastoral Stopford Brooke with leanings towards Positivism, and we leave him preaching platitudes to a village congregation. However, in spite of this commonplace conclusion there is a great deal in Mr. Hayes's poem that is strong and fine, and he undoubtedly possesses a fair ear for music and a remarkable faculty of poetical expression. Some of his descriptive touches of nature, such as

In meeting woods, whereon a film of mist
Slept like the bloom upon the purple grape,

are very graceful and suggestive, and he will probably make his mark in literature.

There is much that is fascinating in Mr. Rennell Rodd's last volume, *The Unknown Madonna and Other Poems*. Mr. Rodd looks at life with all the charming optimism of a young man, though he is quite conscious of the fact that a stray note of melancholy, here and there, has an artistic as well as a popular value; he has a keen sense of the pleasurable of colour, and his verse is distinguished by a certain refinement and purity of outline; though not passionate he can play very prettily with the words of passion, and his emotions are quite healthy and quite harmless. *In Excelsis*, the most ambitious poem in the book, is somewhat too abstract and metaphysical, and such lines as

Lift thee o'er thy 'here' and 'now,'
Look beyond thine 'I' and 'thou,'

are excessively tedious. But when Mr. Rodd leaves the problem of the Unconditioned to take care of itself, and makes no attempt to solve the mysteries of the Ego and the non-Ego, he is very pleasant

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reading indeed. *A Mazurka of Chopin* is charming, in spite of the awkwardness of the fifth line, and so are the verses on Assisi, and those on San Servolo at Venice. These last have all the brilliancy of a clever pastel. The prettiest thing in the whole volume is this little lyric on Spring:

Such blue of sky, so palely fair,
Such glow of earth, such lucid air!
Such purple on the mountain lines,
Such deep new verdure in the pines!
The live light strikes the broken towers,
The crocus bulbs burst into flowers,
The sap strikes up the black vine stock,
And the lizard wakes in the splintered rock,
And the wheat's young green peeps through the sod,
And the heart is touched with a thought of God;
The very silence seems to sing,
It must be Spring, it must be Spring!

We do not care for 'palely fair' in the first line, and the repetition of the word 'strikes' is not very felicitous, but the grace of movement and delicacy of touch are pleasing.

The Wind, by Mr. James Ross, is a rather gusty ode, written apparently without any definite scheme of metre, and not very impressive as it lacks both the strength of the blizzard and the sweetness of Zephyr. Here is the opening:

The roaming, tentless wind
No rest can ever find—
From east, and west, and south, and north
He is for ever driven forth!
From the chill east
Where fierce hyænas seek their awful feast:
From the warm west,
By beams of glitt'ring summer blest.

Nothing could be much worse than this, and if the line 'Where fierce hyænas seek their awful feast' is

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intended to frighten us, it entirely misses its effect. The ode is followed by some sonnets which are destined, we fear, to be *ludibria ventis*. Immortality, even in the nineteenth century, is not granted to those who rhyme 'awe' and 'war' together.

Mr. Isaac Sharp's *Saul of Tarsus* is an interesting, and, in some respects, a fine poem.

Saul of Tarsus, silently,
With a silent company,
To Damascus' gates drew nigh.

And his eyes, too, and his mien
Were, as are the eagles, keen ;
All the man was aquiline—

are two strong, simple verses, and indeed the spirit of the whole poem is dignified and stately. The rest of the volume, however, is disappointing. Ordinary theology has long since converted its gold into lead, and words and phrases that once touched the heart of the world have become wearisome and meaningless through repetition. If Theology desires to move us, she must re-write her formulas.

There is something very pleasant in coming across a poet who can apostrophise Byron as

transcendent star
That gems the firmament of poetry,

and can speak of Longfellow as a 'mighty Titan.' Reckless panegyrics of this kind show a kindly nature and a good heart, and Mr. Mackenzie's *Highland Daydreams* could not possibly offend any one. It must be admitted that they are rather old-fashioned, but this is usually the case with natural spontaneous verse. It takes a great artist to be thoroughly modern. Nature is always a little behind the age.

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The Story of the Cross, an attempt to versify the Gospel narratives, is a strange survival of the 'Tate and Brady school of poetry. Mr. Nash, who styles himself 'a humble soldier in the army of Faith,' expresses a hope that his book may 'invigorate devotional feeling, especially among the young, to whom verse is perhaps more attractive than to their elders,' but we should be sorry to think that people of any age could admire such a paraphrase as the following:

Foxes have holes, in which to slink for rest,
The birds of air find shelter in the nest;
But He, the Son of Man and Lord of all,
Has no abiding place His own to call.

It is a curious fact that the worst work is always done with the best intentions, and that people are never so trivial as when they take themselves very seriously.

(1) *David Westren*. By Alfred Hayes, M.A. New Coll., Oxon. (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers.)

(2) *The Unknown Madonna and Other Poems*. By Rennell Rodd. (David Stott.)

(3) *The Wind and Six Sonnets*. By James Ross. (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith.)

(4) *Saul of Tarsus*. By Isaac Sharp. (Kegan Paul.)

(5) *Highland Daydreams*. By George Mackenzie. (Inverness: Office of the Northern Chronicle.)

(6) *The Story of the Cross*. By Charles Nash. (Elliot Stock.)

M. CARO ON GEORGE SAND

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 14, 1888.)

THE biography of a very great man from the pen of a very ladylike writer—this is the best description we can give of M. Caro's *Life of George Sand*. The late Professor of the Sorbonne could chatter charmingly about culture, and

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had all the fascinating insincerity of an accomplished phrase-monger; being an extremely superior person he had a great contempt for Democracy and its doings, but he was always popular with the Duchesses of the Faubourg, as there was nothing in history or in literature that he could not explain away for their edification; having never done anything remarkable he was naturally elected a member of the Academy, and he always remained loyal to the traditions of that thoroughly respectable and thoroughly pretentious institution. In fact, he was just the sort of man who should never have attempted to write a Life of George Sand or to interpret George Sand's genius. He was too feminine to appreciate the grandeur of that large womanly nature, too much of a dilettante to realise the masculine force of that strong and ardent mind. He never gets at the secret of George Sand, and never brings us near to her wonderful personality. He looks on her simply as a littérateur, as a writer of pretty stories of country life and of charming, if somewhat exaggerated, romances. But George Sand was much more than this. Beautiful as are such books as *Consuelo* and *Mauprat*, *François le Champi* and *La Mare au Diable*, yet in none of them is she adequately expressed, by none of them is she adequately revealed. As Mr. Matthew Arnold said, many years ago, 'We do not know George Sand unless we feel the spirit which goes through her work as a whole.' With this spirit, however, M. Caro has no sympathy. Madame Sand's doctrines are antediluvian, he tells us, her philosophy is quite dead and her ideas of social regeneration are Utopian, incoherent and absurd. The best thing for us to do is to forget these silly dreams and to read *Teverino* and *Le Secrétaire*

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Intime. Poor M. Caro! This spirit, which he treats with such airy flippancy, is the very leaven of modern life. It is remoulding the world for us and fashioning our age anew. If it is antediluvian, it is so because the deluge is yet to come; if it is Utopian, then Utopia must be added to our geographies. To what curious straits M. Caro is driven by his violent prejudices may be estimated by the fact that he tries to class George Sand's novels with the old *Chansons de geste*, the stories of adventure characteristic of primitive literatures; whereas in using fiction as a vehicle of thought, and romance as a means of influencing the social ideals of her age, George Sand was merely carrying out the traditions of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Diderot and of Chateaubriand. The novel, says M. Caro, must be allied either to poetry or to science. That it has found in philosophy one of its strongest allies seems not to have occurred to him. In an English critic such a view might possibly be excusable. Our greatest novelists, such as Fielding, Scott and Thackeray cared little for the philosophy of their age. But coming, as it does, from a French critic, the statement seems to show a strange want of recognition of one of the most important elements of French fiction. Nor, even in the narrow limits that he has imposed upon himself, can M. Caro be said to be a very fortunate or felicitous critic. To take merely one instance out of many, he says nothing of George Sand's delightful treatment of art and the artist's life. And yet how exquisitely does she analyse each separate art and present it to us in its relation to life! In *Consuelo* she tells us of music; in *Horace* of authorship; in *Le Château des Désertes* of acting; in *Les Maîtres Mosaïstes* of mosaic work; in *Le*

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Château de Pictordu of portrait painting; and in *La Daniella* of the painting of landscape. What Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Browning have done for England she did for France. She invented an art literature. It is unnecessary, however, to discuss any of M. Caro's minor failings, for the whole effect of the book, so far as it attempts to portray for us the scope and character of George Sand's genius, is entirely spoiled by the false attitude assumed from the beginning, and though the dictum may seem to many harsh and exclusive, we cannot help feeling that an absolute incapacity for appreciating the spirit of a great writer is no qualification for writing a treatise on the subject.

As for Madame Sand's private life, which is so intimately connected with her art (for, like Goethe, she had to live her romances before she could write them), M. Caro says hardly anything about it. He passes it over with a modesty that almost makes one blush, and for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of those *grandes dames* whose passions M. Paul Bourget analyses with such subtlety, he transforms her mother, who was a typical French *grisette*, into 'a very amiable and *spirituelle* milliner'! It must be admitted that Joseph Surface himself could hardly show greater tact and delicacy, though we ourselves must plead guilty to preferring Madame Sand's own description of her as an 'enfant du vieux pavé de Paris.'

As regards the English version, which is by M. Gustave Masson, it may be up to the intellectual requirements of the Harrow schoolboys, but it will hardly satisfy those who consider that accuracy, lucidity and ease are essential to a good translation. Its carelessness is absolutely astounding, and it is

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difficult to understand how a publisher like Mr. Routledge could have allowed such a piece of work to issue from his press. 'Il descend avec le sourire d'un Machiavel' appears as 'he descends into the smile of a Machiavelli'; George Sand's remark to Flaubert about literary style, 'tu la considères comme un but, elle n'est qu'un effet' is translated 'you consider it an end, it is merely *an effort*'; and such a simple phrase as 'ainsi le veut l'esthétique du roman' is converted into 'so the æsthetes of the world would have it.' 'Il faudra relâcher mes économies' is 'I will have to draw upon my savings,' not 'my economies will assuredly be relaxed'; 'cassures et épineuses' is not 'cleavages full of rosin,' and 'Mme. Sand ne réussit que deux fois' is hardly 'Madame Sand was not twice successful.' 'Querelles d'école' does not mean 'school disputations'; 'ceux qui se font une sorte d'esthétique de l'indifférence absolue' is not 'those of which the æsthetics seem to be an absolute indifference'; 'chimère' should not be translated 'chimera,' nor 'lettres inéditées' 'inedited letters'; 'ridicules' means absurdities, not 'ridicules,' and 'qui pourra définir sa pensée?' is not 'who can clearly despise her thought?' M. Masson comes to grief over even such a simple sentence as 'elle s'étonna des fureurs qui accueillirent ce livre, ne comprenant pas que l'on hâisse un auteur à travers son œuvre,' which he translates 'she was surprised at the storm which greeted this book, *not understanding that the author is hated through his work.*' Then, passing over such phrases as 'substituted by religion' instead of 'replaced by religion,' and 'vulgarisation' where 'popularisation' is meant, we come to that most irritating form of translation, the literal word-for-word style. The stream 'excites

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itself by the declivity which it obeys' is one of M. Masson's finest achievements in this *genre*, and it is an admirable instance of the influence of school-boys on their masters. However, it would be tedious to make a complete 'catalogue of slips,' so we will content ourselves by saying that M. Masson's translation is not merely quite unworthy of himself, but is also quite undeserved by the public. Nowadays, the public has its feelings.

George Sand. By the late Elmé Marie Caro. Translated by Gustave Masson, B.A., Assistant Master, Harrow School. 'Great French Writers' Series. (Routledge and Sons.)

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VII

(*Full Mail Gazette*, October 24, 1888.)

MR. IAN HAMILTON'S *Ballad of Hádji* is undeniably clever. Hádji is a wonderful Arab horse that a reckless hunter rides to death in the pursuit of a wild boar, and the moral of the poem—for there is a moral—seems to be that an absorbing passion is a very dangerous thing and blunts the human sympathies. In the course of the chase a little child is drowned, a Brahmin maiden murdered, and an aged peasant severely wounded, but the hunter cares for none of these things and will not hear of stopping to render any assistance. Some of the stanzas are very graceful, notably one beginning

Yes—like a bubble filled with smoke—
The curd-white moon upswimming broke
The vacancy of space;

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but such lines as the following, which occur in the description of the fight with the boar—

I hung as close as keepsake locket
On maiden breast—but from its socket
He wrenched my bridle arm,

are dreadful, and 'his brains festooned the thorn' is not a very happy way of telling the reader how the boar died. All through the volume we find the same curious mixture of good and bad. To say that the sun kisses the earth 'with flame-moustachoed lip' is awkward and uncouth, and yet the poem in which the expression occurs has some pretty lines. Mr. Ian Hamilton should prune. Pruning, whether in the garden or in the study, is a most healthy and useful employment. The volume is nicely printed, but Mr. Strang's frontispiece is not a great success, and most of the tail-pieces seem to have been designed without any reference to the size of the page.

Mr. Catty dedicates his book to the memory of Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge and Keats—a somewhat pompous signboard for such very ordinary wine—and an inscription in golden letters on the cover informs us that his poems are 'addressed to the rising generation,' whom, he tells us elsewhere, he is anxious to initiate into the great comprehensive truth that 'Virtue is no other than self-interest, deeply understood.' In order to further this laudable aim he has written a very tedious blank verse poem which he calls *The Secret of Content*, but it certainly does not convey that secret to the reader. It is heavy, abstract and prosaic, and shows how intolerably dull a man can be who has the best intentions and the most earnest beliefs. In the rest of the volume,

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where Mr. Catty does not take himself quite so seriously, there are some rather pleasing things. The sonnet on Shelley's room at University College would be admirable but for the unmusical character of the last line.

Green in the wizard arms
Of the foam-bearded Atlantic,
An isle of old enchantment,
A melancholy isle,
Enchanted and dreaming lies;
And there, by Shannon's flowing
In the moonlight, spectre-thin,
The spectre Erin sits.

Wail no more, lonely one, mother of exile wail no more,
Banshee of the world—no more!
Thy sorrows are the world's, thou art no more alone;
Thy wrongs the world's—

are the first and last stanzas of Mr. Todhunter's poem *The Banshee*. To throw away the natural grace of rhyme from a modern song is, as Mr. Swinburne once remarked, a wilful abdication of half the power and half the charm of verse, and we cannot say that Mr. Todhunter has given us much that consoles us for its loss. Part of his poem reads like a translation of an old Bardic song, part of it like rough material for poetry, and part of it like misshapen prose. It is an interesting specimen of poetic writing but it is not a perfect work of art. It is amorphous and inchoate, and the same must be said of the two other poems, *The Doom of the Children of Lir*, and *The Lamentation for the Sons of Turann*. Rhyme gives architecture as well as melody to song, and though the lovely lute-built walls of Thebes may have risen up to unrhymed choral metres, we

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have had no modern Amphion to work such wonders for us. Such a verse as—

Five were the chiefs who challenged
By their deeds the Over-kingship,
Boo Derg, the Daghdá's son, Ilbrac of Assaroe,
And Lir of the White Field in the plain of Emain Macha;
And after them stood up Midhir the proud, who reigned
Upon the hills of Bri,
Of Bri the lover of Liath, Bri of the broken heart;
And last was Angus Og; all these had many voices,
But for Boo Derg were most,

has, of course, an archæological interest, but has no artistic value at all. Indeed, from the point of view of art, the few little poems at the end of the volume are worth all the ambitious pseudo-epics that Mr. Todhunter has tried to construct out of Celtic lore. *A Bacchic Day* is charming, and the sonnet on the open-air performance of *The Faithfull Shepherdess* is most gracefully phrased and most happy in conception.

Mr. Peacock is an American poet, and Professor Thomas Danleigh Supplée, A.M., Ph.D., F.R.S., who has written a preface to his *Poems of the Plains and Songs of the Solitudes*, tells us that he is entitled to be called the Laureate of the West. Though a staunch Republican, Mr. Peacock, according to the enthusiastic Professor, is not ashamed of his ancestor King William of Holland, nor of his relatives Lord and Lady Peacock who, it seems, are natives of Scotland. He was brought up at Zanesville, Muskingum Co., Ohio, where his father edited the Zanesville *Aurora*, and he had an uncle who was 'a superior man' and edited the Wheeling *Intelligencer*. His poems seem to be extremely popular, and have been highly praised. The Professor informs us, by Victor Hugo, the *Saturday Review* and the *Com-*

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mercial Advertiser. The preface is the most amusing part of the book, but the poems also are worth studying. *The Maniac*, *The Bandit Chief*, and *The Outlaw* can hardly be called light reading, but we strongly recommend the poem on Chicago :

Chicago! great city of the West!
All that wealth, all that power invest;
Thou sprang like magic from the sand,
As touched by the magician's wand.

'Thou sprang' is slightly depressing, and the second line is rather obscure, but we should not measure by too high a standard the untutored utterances of artless nature. The opening lines of *The Vendetta* also deserve mention :

When stars are glowing through day's gloaming glow,
Reflecting from ocean's deep, mighty flow,
At twilight, when no grim shadows of night,
Like ghouls, have stalked in wake of the light.

The first line is certainly a masterpiece, and, indeed, the whole volume is full of gems of this kind. The Professor remarks in his elaborate preface that Mr. Peacock 'frequently rises to the sublime,' and the two passages quoted above show how keenly critical is his taste in these matters and how well the poet deserves his panegyric.

Mr. Alexander Skene Smith's *Holiday Recreations and Other Poems* is heralded by a preface for which Principal Cairns is responsible. Principal Cairns claims that the life-story enshrined in Mr. Smith's poems shows the wide diffusion of native fire and literary culture in all parts of Scotland, 'happily under higher auspices than those of mere poetic impulse.' This is hardly a very felicitous way of introducing a poet, nor can we say that Mr. Smith's poems are distinguished by either fire or

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culture. He has a placid, pleasant way of writing, and, indeed, his verses cannot do any harm, though he really should not publish such attempts at metrical versions of the Psalms as the following :

A septuagenarian
We frequently may see ;
An octogenarian
If one should live to be,
He is a burden to himself
With weariness and woe
And soon he dies, and off he flies,
And leaveth all below.

The 'literary culture' that produced these lines is, we fear, not of a very high order.

'I study Poetry simply as a fine art by which I may exercise my intellect and elevate my taste,' wrote the late Mr. George Morine many years ago to a friend, and the little posthumous volume that now lies before us contains the record of his quiet literary life. One of the sonnets, that entitled *Sonnet*, appeared in Mr. Waddington's anthology, a little over ten years after Mr. Morine's death, but this is the first time that his collected poems have been published. They are often distinguished by a grave and chastened beauty of style, and their solemn cadences have something of the 'grand manner' about them. The editor, Mr. Wilton, to whom Mr. Morine bequeathed his manuscripts, seems to have performed his task with great tact and judgment, and we hope that this little book will meet with the recognition that it deserves.

(1) *The Ballad of Hádji and Other Poems.* By Ian Hamilton (Kegan Paul.)

(2) *Poems in the Modern Spirit, with The Secret of Content.* By Charles Catty. (Walter Scott.)

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(3) *The Banshee and Other Poems.* By John Todhunter. (Kegan Paul.)

(4) *Poems of the Plain and Songs of the Solitudes.* By Thomas Bower Peacock. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

(5) *Holiday Recreations and Other Poems.* By Alexander Skene Smith. (Chapman and Hall.)

(6) *Poems.* By George Morine. (Bell and Son.)

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(*Woman's World*, November 1888.)

MR. ALAN COLE'S carefully-edited translation of M. Lefébure's history of *Embroidery and Lace* is one of the most fascinating books that has appeared on this delightful subject. M. Lefébure is one of the administrators of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at Paris, besides being a lace manufacturer; and his work has not merely an important historical value, but as a handbook of technical instruction it will be found of the greatest service by all needle-women. Indeed, as the translator himself points out, M. Lefébure's book suggests the question whether it is not rather by the needle and the bobbin, than by the brush, the graver or the chisel, that the influence of woman should assert itself in the arts. In Europe, at any rate, woman is sovereign in the domain of art-needle-work, and few men would care to dispute with her the right of using those delicate implements so intimately associated with the dexterity of her nimble and slender fingers; nor is there any reason why the productions of embroidery should not, as Mr. Alan Cole suggests, be placed on the same level with those of painting, engraving and sculpture, though there must always be a great difference between those purely decorative arts that glorify

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their own material and the more imaginative arts in which the material is, as it were, annihilated, and absorbed into the creation of a new form. In the beautifying of modern houses it certainly must be admitted—indeed, it should be more generally recognised than it is—that rich embroidery on hangings and curtains, *portières*, couches and the like, produces a far more decorative and far more artistic effect than can be gained from our somewhat wearisome English practice of covering the walls with pictures and engravings; and the almost complete disappearance of embroidery from dress has robbed modern costume of one of the chief elements of grace and fancy.

That, however, a great improvement has taken place in English embroidery during the last ten or fifteen years cannot, I think, be denied. It is shown, not merely in the work of individual artists, such as Mrs. Holiday, Miss May Morris and others, but also in the admirable productions of the South Kensington School of Embroidery (the best—indeed, the only really good—school that South Kensington has produced). It is pleasant to note, on turning over the leaves of M. Lefébure's book, that in this we are merely carrying out certain old traditions of Early English art. In the seventh century, St. Ethelreda, first abbess of the Monastery of Ely, made an offering to St. Cuthbert of a sacred ornament she had worked with gold and precious stones, and the cope and maniple of St. Cuthbert, which are preserved at Durham, are considered to be specimens of *opus Anglicanum*. In the year 800, the Bishop of Durham allotted the income of a farm of two hundred acres for life to an embroideress named Eanswitha, in consideration of her keeping

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in repair the vestments of the clergy in his diocese. The battle standard of King Alfred was embroidered by Danish princesses; and the Anglo-Saxon Gudric gave Alcuid a piece of land, on condition that she instructed his daughter in needle-work. Queen Mathilda bequeathed to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen a tunic embroidered at Winchester by the wife of one Alderet; and when William presented himself to the English nobles, after the Battle of Hastings, he wore a mantle covered with Anglo-Saxon embroideries, which is probably, M. Lefébure suggests, the same as that mentioned in the inventory of the Bayeux Cathedral, where, after the entry relating to the *broderie à telle* (representing the conquest of England), two mantles are described—one of King William, 'all of gold, powdered with crosses and blossoms of gold, and edged along the lower border with an orphrey of figures.' The most splendid example of the *opus Anglicanum* now in existence is, of course, the Syon cope at the South Kensington Museum; but English work seems to have been celebrated all over the Continent. Pope Innocent iv. so admired the splendid vestments worn by the English clergy in 1246, that he ordered similar articles from Cistercian monasteries in England. St. Dunstan, the artistic English monk, was known as a designer for embroideries; and the stole of St. Thomas à Becket is still preserved in the cathedral at Sens, and shows us the interlaced scroll-forms used by Anglo-Saxon MS. illuminators.

How far this modern artistic revival of rich and delicate embroidery will bear fruit depends, of course, almost entirely on the energy and study that women are ready to devote to it; but I think that

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it must be admitted that all our decorative arts in Europe at present have, at least, this element of strength—that they are in immediate relationship with the decorative arts of Asia. Wherever we find in European history a revival of decorative art, it has, I fancy, nearly always been due to Oriental influence and contact with Oriental nations. Our own keenly intellectual art has more than once been ready to sacrifice real decorative beauty either to imitative presentation or to ideal motive. It has taken upon itself the burden of expression, and has sought to interpret the secrets of thought and passion. In its marvellous truth of presentation it has found its strength, and yet its weakness is there also. It is never with impunity that an art seeks to mirror life. If Truth has her revenge upon those who do not follow her, she is often pitiless to her worshippers. In Byzantium the two arts met—Greek art, with its intellectual sense of form, and its quick sympathy with humanity; Oriental art, with its gorgeous materialism, its frank rejection of imitation, its wonderful secrets of craft and colour, its splendid textures, its rare metals and jewels, its marvellous and priceless traditions. They had, indeed, met before, but in Byzantium they were married; and the sacred tree of the Persians, the palm of Zoroaster, was embroidered on the hem of the garments of the Western world. Even the Iconoclasts, the Philistines of theological history, who, in one of those strange outbursts of rage against Beauty that seem to occur only amongst European nations, rose up against the wonder and magnificence of the new art, served merely to distribute its secrets more widely; and in the *Liber Pontificalis*, written in 687 by Athanasius, the

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librarian, we read of an influx into Rome of gorgeous embroideries, the work of men who had arrived from Constantinople and from Greece. The triumph of the Mussulman gave the decorative art of Europe a new departure—that very principle of their religion that forbade the actual representation of any object in nature being of the greatest artistic service to them, though it was not, of course, strictly carried out. The Saracens introduced into Sicily the art of weaving silken and golden fabrics; and from Sicily the manufacture of fine stuffs spread to the North of Italy, and became localised in Genoa, Florence, Venice, and other towns. A still greater art-movement took place in Spain under the Moors and Saracens, who brought over workmen from Persia to make beautiful things for them. M. Lefébure tells us of Persian embroidery penetrating as far as Andalusia; and Almeria, like Palermo, had its Hôtel des Tiraz, which rivalled the Hôtel des Tiraz at Bagdad, *tiraz* being the generic name for ornamental tissues and costumes made with them. Spangles (those pretty little discs of gold, silver, or polished steel, used in certain embroidery for dainty glinting effects) were a Saracenic invention; and Arabic letters often took the place of letters in the Roman characters for use in inscriptions upon embroidered robes and Middle Age tapestries, their decorative value being so much greater. The book of crafts by Etienne Boileau, provost of the merchants in 1258-1268, contains a curious enumeration of the different craft-guilds of Paris, among which we find 'the tapiciers, or makers of the *tapis sarrasinois* (or Saracen cloths), who say that their craft is for the service only of churches, or great men like kings and counts'; and, indeed,

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even in our own day, nearly all our words descriptive of decorative textures and decorative methods point to an Oriental origin. What the inroads of the Mohammedans did for Sicily and Spain, the return of the Crusaders did for the other countries of Europe. The nobles who left for Palestine clad in armour, came back in the rich stuffs of the East; and their costumes, pouches (*aumônières sarra-sinoises*), and caparisons excited the admiration of the needle-workers of the West. Matthew Paris says that at the sacking of Antioch, in 1098, gold, silver and priceless costumes were so equally distributed among the Crusaders, that many who the night before were famishing and imploring relief, suddenly found themselves overwhelmed with wealth; and Robert de Clair tells us of the wonderful fêtes that followed the capture of Constantinople. The thirteenth century, as M. Lefébure points out, was conspicuous for an increased demand in the West for embroidery. Many Crusaders made offerings to churches of plunder from Palestine; and St. Louis, on his return from the first Crusade, offered thanks at St. Denis to God for mercies bestowed on him during his six years' absence and travel, and presented some richly-embroidered stuffs to be used on great occasions as coverings to the reliquaries containing the relics of holy martyrs. European embroidery, having thus become possessed of new materials and wonderful methods, developed on its own intellectual and imitative lines, inclining, as it went on, to the purely pictorial, and seeking to rival painting, and to produce landscapes and figure-subjects with elaborate perspective and subtle aerial effects. A fresh Oriental influence, however, came through the Dutch and the Portuguese, and

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the famous *Compagnie des Grandes Indes*; and M. Lefébure gives an illustration of a door-hanging now in the Cluny Museum, where we find the French *fleurs-de-lys* intermixed with Indian ornament. The hangings of Madame de Maintenon's room at Fontainebleau, which were embroidered at St. Cyr, represent Chinese scenery upon a jonquil-yellow ground.

Clothes were sent out ready cut to the East to be embroidered, and many of the delightful coats of the period of Louis xv. and Louis xvi. owe their dainty decoration to the needles of Chinese artists. In our own day the influence of the East is strongly marked. Persia has sent us her carpets for patterns, and Cashmere her lovely shawls, and India her dainty muslins finely worked with gold thread palmates, and stitched over with iridescent beetles' wings. We are beginning now to dye by Oriental methods, and the silk robes of China and Japan have taught us new wonders of colour-combination, and new subtleties of delicate design. Whether we have yet learned to make a wise use of what we have acquired is less certain. If books produce an effect, this book of M. Lefébure should certainly make us study with still deeper interest the whole question of embroidery, and by those who already work with their needles it will be found full of most fertile suggestion and most admirable advice.

Even to read of the marvellous works of embroidery that were fashioned in bygone ages is pleasant. Time has kept a few fragments of Greek embroidery of the fourth century B.C. for us. One is figured in M. Lefébure's book—a chain-stitch embroidery of yellow flax upon a mulberry-coloured worsted material, with graceful spirals and palmetto-

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patterns: and another, a tapestried cloth powdered with ducks, was reproduced in the *Woman's World* some months ago for an article by Mr. Alan Cole.¹ Now and then we find in the tomb of some dead Egyptian a piece of delicate work. In the treasury at Ratisbon is preserved a specimen of Byzantine embroidery on which the Emperor Constantine is depicted riding on a white palfrey, and receiving homage from the East and West. Metz has a red silk cope wrought with great eagles, the gift of Charlemagne, and Bayeux the needle-wrought epic of Queen Matilda. But where is the great crocus-coloured robe, wrought for Athena, on which the gods fought against the giants? Where is the huge velarium that Nero stretched across the Colosseum at Rome, on which was represented the starry sky, and Apollo driving a chariot drawn by steeds? How one would like to see the curious table-napkins wrought for Heliogabalus, on which were displayed all the dainties and viands that could be wanted for a feast; or the mortuary-cloth of King Chilperic, with its three hundred golden bees; or the fantastic robes that excited the indignation of the Bishop of Pontus, and were embroidered with 'lions, panthers, bears, dogs, forests, rocks, hunters—all, in fact, that painters can copy from nature.' Charles of Orleans had a coat, on the sleeves of which were embroidered the verses of a song beginning '*Madame, je suis tout joyeux,*' the musical accompaniment of the words being wrought in gold thread, and each note, of square shape in those days, formed with four pearls.² The room prepared in the palace at Rheims for the use of Queen Joan of Burgundy was decorated with

¹ September 1888.

² See *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, chapter xi., page 222.

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'thirteen hundred and twenty-one *papegauts* (parrots) made in broidery and blazoned with the King's arms, and five hundred and sixty-one butterflies, whose wings were similarly ornamented with the Queen's arms—the whole worked in fine gold.' Catherine de Medicis had a mourning-bed made for her 'of black velvet embroidered with pearls and powdered with crescents and suns.' Its curtains were of damask, 'with leafy wreaths and garlands figured upon a gold and silver ground, and fringed along the edges with broideries of pearls,' and it stood in a room hung with rows of the Queen's devices in cut black velvet on cloth of silver. Louis XIV. had gold-embroidered caryatides fifteen feet high in his apartment. The state-bed of Sobieski, King of Poland, was made of Smyrna gold brocade embroidered in turquoises and pearls, with verses from the Koran; its supports were of silver-gilt, beautifully chased and profusely set with enamelled and jewelled medallions. He had taken it from the Turkish camp before Vienna, and the standard of Mahomet had stood under it. The Duchess de la Ferté wore a dress of reddish-brown velvet, the skirt of which, adjusted in graceful folds, was held up by big butterflies made of Dresden china; the front was a *tablier* of cloth of silver, upon which was embroidered an orchestra of musicians arranged in a pyramidal group, consisting of a series of six ranks of performers, with beautiful instruments wrought in raised needle-work. 'Into the night go one and all,' as Mr. Henley sings in his charming *Ballade of Dead Actors*.

Many of the facts related by M. Lefébure about the embroiderers' guilds are also extremely interesting. Etienne Boileau, in his book of crafts, to which

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I have already alluded, tells us that a member of the guild was prohibited from using gold of less value than 'eight sous (about 6s.) the skein; he was bound to use the best silk, and never to mix thread with silk, because that made the work false and bad.' The test or trial piece prescribed for a worker who was the son of a master-embroiderer was 'a single figure, a sixth of the natural size, to be shaded in gold'; whilst one not the son of a master was required to produce 'a complete incident with many figures.' The book of crafts also mentions 'cutters-out and stencillers and illuminators' amongst those employed in the industry of embroidery. In 1551 the Parisian Corporation of Embroiderers issued a notice that 'for the future, the colouring in representations of nude figures and faces should be done in three or four gradations of carnation-dyed silk, and not, as formerly, in white silks.' During the fifteenth century every household of any position retained the services of an embroiderer by the year. The preparation of colours also, whether for painting or for dyeing threads and textile fabrics, was a matter which, M. Lefébure points out, received close attention from the artists of the Middle Ages. Many undertook long journeys to obtain the more famous recipes, which they filed, subsequently adding to and correcting them as experience dictated. Nor were great artists above making and supplying designs for embroidery. Raphael made designs for Francis I., and Boucher for Louis xv.; and in the Ambras collection at Vienna is a superb set of sacerdotal robes from designs by the brothers Van Eyck and their pupils. Early in the sixteenth century books of embroidery designs were produced, and their success was so great that in a few years French,

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German, Italian, Flemish, and English publishers spread broadcast books of design made by their best engravers. In the same century, in order to give the designers opportunity of studying directly from nature, Jean Robin opened a garden with conservatories, in which he cultivated strange varieties of plants then but little known in our latitudes. The rich brocades and brocadelles of the time are characterised by the introduction of large flowery patterns, with pomegranates and other fruits with fine foliage.

The second part of M. Lefébure's book is devoted to the history of lace, and though some may not find it quite as interesting as the earlier portion it will more than repay perusal; and those who still work in this delicate and fanciful art will find many valuable suggestions in it, as well as a large number of exceedingly beautiful designs. Compared to embroidery, lace seems comparatively modern. M. Lefébure and Mr. Alan Cole tell us that there is no reliable or documentary evidence to prove the existence of lace before the fifteenth century. Of course in the East, light tissues, such as gauzes, muslins, and nets, were made at very early times, and were used as veils and scarfs after the manner of subsequent laces, and women enriched them with some sort of embroidery, or varied the openness of them by here and there drawing out threads. The threads of fringes seem also to have been plaited and knotted together, and the borders of one of the many fashions of Roman toga were of open reticulated weaving. The Egyptian Museum at the Louvre has a curious network embellished with glass beads; and the monk Reginald, who took part in opening the tomb of St. Cuthbert at Durham in the twelfth century, writes that the Saint's shroud had a fringe of linen threads

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an inch long, surmounted by a border, 'worked upon the threads,' with representations of birds and pairs of beasts, there being between each such pair a branching tree, a survival of the palm of Zoroaster, to which I have before alluded. Our authors, however, do not in these examples recognise lace, the production of which involves more refined and artistic methods, and postulates a combination of skill and varied execution carried to a higher degree of perfection. Lace, as we know it, seems to have had its origin in the habit of embroidering linen. White embroidery on linen has, M. Lefébure remarks, a cold and monotonous aspect; that with coloured threads is brighter and gayer in effect, but is apt to fade in frequent washing; but white embroidery relieved by open spaces in, or shapes cut from, the linen ground, is possessed of an entirely new charm; and from a sense of this the birth may be traced of an art in the result of which happy contrasts are effected between ornamental details of close texture and others of open-work.

Soon, also, was suggested the idea that, instead of laboriously withdrawing threads from stout linen, it would be more convenient to introduce a needle-made pattern into an open network ground, which was called a *lacis*. Of this kind of embroidery many specimens are extant. The Cluny Museum possesses a linen cap said to have belonged to Charles v.; and an alb of linen drawn-thread work, supposed to have been made by Anne of Bohemia (1527), is preserved in the cathedral at Prague. Catherine de Medicis had a bed draped with squares of *réseuil*, or *lacis*, and it is recorded that 'the girls and servants of her household consumed much time in making squares of *réseuil*.' The interesting pattern-

A FASCINATING BOOK

books for open-ground embroidery, of which the first was published in 1527 by Pierre Quinty. of Cologne, supply us with the means of tracing the stages in the transition from white thread embroidery to needle-point lace. We meet in them with a style of needle-work which differs from embroidery in not being wrought upon a stuff foundation. It is, in fact, true lace, done, as it were, 'in the air,' both ground and pattern being entirely produced by the lace-maker.

The elaborate use of lace in costume was, of course, largely stimulated by the fashion of wearing ruffs, and their companion cuffs or sleeves. Catherine de Medicis induced one Frederic Vinciolo to come from Italy and make ruffs and gadrooned collars, the fashion of which she started in France; and Henry III. was so punctilious over his ruffs that he would iron and gaffer his cuffs and collars himself rather than see their pleats limp and out of shape. The pattern-books also gave a great impulse to the art. M. Lefébure mentions German books with patterns of eagles, heraldic emblems, hunting scenes, and plants and leaves belonging to Northern vegetation; and Italian books, in which the *motifs* consist of oleander blossoms, and elegant wreaths and scrolls, landscapes with mythological scenes, and hunting episodes, less realistic than the Northern ones, in which appear fauns, and nymphs or *amorini* shooting arrows. With regard to these patterns, M. Lefébure notices a curious fact. The oldest painting in which lace is depicted is that of a lady, by Carpaccio, who died about 1523. The cuffs of the lady are edged with a narrow lace, the pattern of which reappears in Vecellio's *Corona*, a book not published until 1591. This particular pattern

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was, therefore, in use at least eighty years before it got into circulation with other published patterns.

It was not, however, till the seventeenth century that lace acquired a really independent character and individuality, and M. Duplessis states that the production of the more noteworthy of early laces owes more to the influence of men than to that of women. The reign of Louis XIV. witnessed the production of the most stately needle-point laces, the transformation of Venetian point, and the growth of *Points d'Alençon, d'Argentan, de Bruxelles and d'Angleterre*.

The king, aided by Colbert, determined to make France the centre, if possible, for lace manufacture, sending for this purpose both to Venice and to Flanders for workers. The studio of the Gobelins supplied designs. The dandies had their huge rabatos or bands falling from beneath the chin over the breast, and great prelates, like Bossuet and Fénelon, wore their wonderful albs and rochets. It is related of a collar made at Venice for Louis XIV. that the lace-workers, being unable to find sufficiently fine horse-hair, employed some of their own hairs instead, in order to secure that marvellous delicacy of work which they aimed at producing.

In the eighteenth century, Venice, finding that laces of lighter texture were sought after, set herself to make rose-point; and at the Court of Louis XV. the choice of lace was regulated by still more elaborate etiquette. The Revolution, however, ruined many of the manufactures. Alençon survived, and Napoleon encouraged it, and endeavoured to renew the old rules about the necessity of wearing point-lace at Court receptions. A wonderful piece of lace, powdered over with devices of bees, and costing 40,000 francs, was ordered. It

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was begun for the Empress Josephine, but in the course of its making her escutcheons were replaced by those of Marie Louise.

M. Lefébure concludes his interesting history by stating very clearly his attitude towards machine-made lace. 'It would be an obvious loss to art,' he says, 'should the making of lace by hand become extinct, for machinery, as skilfully devised as possible, cannot do what the hand does.' It can give us 'the results of processes, not the creations of artistic handicraft.' Art is absent 'where formal calculation pretends to supersede emotion'; it is absent 'where no trace can be detected of intelligence guiding handicraft, whose hesitancies even possess peculiar charm . . . cheapness is never commendable in respect of things which are not absolute necessities; it lowers artistic standard.' These are admirable remarks, and with them we take leave of this fascinating book, with its delightful illustrations, its charming anecdotes, its excellent advice. Mr. Alan Cole deserves the thanks of all who are interested in art for bringing this book before the public in so attractive and so inexpensive a form.

Embroidery and Lace: Their Manufacture and History from the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Day. Translated and enlarged by Alan S. Cole from the French of Ernest Lefébure. (Grevel and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER

VIII

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 16, 1888.)

A FEW years ago some of our minor poets tried to set Science to music, to write sonnets on the survival of the fittest and odes to Natural Selection. Socialism, and the sympathy with those

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who are unfit, seem, if we may judge from Miss Nesbit's remarkable volume, to be the new theme of song, the fresh subject-matter for poetry. The change has some advantages. Scientific laws are at once too abstract and too clearly defined, and even the visible arts have not yet been able to translate into any symbols of beauty the discoveries of modern science. At the Arts and Crafts Exhibition we find the cosmogony of Moses, not the cosmogony of Darwin. To Mr. Burne-Jones Man is still a fallen angel, not a greater ape. Poverty and misery, upon the other hand, are terribly concrete things. We find their incarnation everywhere and, as we are discussing a matter of art, we have no hesitation in saying that they are not devoid of picturesqueness. The etcher or the painter finds in them 'a subject made to his hand,' and the poet has admirable opportunities of drawing weird and dramatic contrasts between the purple of the rich and the rags of the poor. From Miss Nesbit's book comes not merely the voice of sympathy but also the cry of revolution:

This is our vengeance day. Our masters made fat with our
fasting
Shall fall before us like corn when the sickle for harvest is
strong:
Old wrongs shall give might to our arm, remembrance of
wrongs shall make lasting
The graves we will dig for our tyrants we bore with too much
and too long.

The poem from which we take this stanza is remarkably vigorous, and the only consolation that we can offer to the timid and the Tories is that as long as so much strength is employed in blowing the trumpet, the sword, so far as Miss Nesbit is con-

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cerned, will probably remain sheathed. Personally, and looking at the matter from a purely artistic point of view, we prefer Miss Nesbit's gentler moments. Her eye for Nature is peculiarly keen. She has always an exquisite sense of colour and sometimes a most delicate ear for music. Many of her poems, such as *The Moat House*, *Absolution*, and *The Singing of the Magnificat* are true works of art, and *Vies Manquées* is a little gem of song, with its dainty dancing measure, its delicate and wilful fancy and the sharp poignant note of passion that suddenly strikes across it, marring its light laughter and lending its beauty a terrible and tragic meaning.

From the sonnets we take this at random :

Not Spring—too lavish of her bud and leaf—
But Autumn with sad eyes and brows austere,
When fields are bare, and woods are brown and sere,
And leaden skies weep their enchantless grief.
Spring is so much too bright, since Spring is brief,
And in our hearts is Autumn all the year,
Least sad when the wide pastures are most drear
And fields grieve most—robbed of the last gold sheaf.

These too, the opening stanzas of *The Last Envoy*, are charming :

The Wind, that through the silent woodland blows
O'er rippling corn and dreaming pastures goes
Straight to the garden where the heart of Spring
Faints in the heart of Summer's earliest rose.

Dimpling the meadow's grassy green and grey,
By furze that yellows all the common way,
Gathering the gladness of the common broom,
And too persistent fragrance of the may—

Gathering whatever is of sweet and dear,
The wandering wind has passed away from here,
Has passed to where within your garden waits
The concentrated sweetness of the year.

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But Miss Nesbit is not to be judged by mere extracts. Her work is too rich and too full for that.

Mr. Foster is an American poet who has read Hawthorne, which is wise of him, and imitated Longfellow, which is not quite so commendable. His *Rebecca the Witch* is a story of old Salem, written in the metre of *Hiawatha*, with a few rhymes thrown in, and conceived in the spirit of the author of *The Scarlet Letter*. The combination is not very satisfactory, but the poem, as a piece of fiction, has many elements of interest. Mr. Foster seems to be quite popular in America. The *Chicago Times* finds his fancies 'very playful and sunny,' and the *Indianapolis Journal* speaks of his 'tender and appreciative style.' He is certainly a clever story-teller, and *The Noah's Ark* (which 'somehow had escaped the sheriff's hand') is bright and amusing, and its pathos, like the pathos of a melodrama, is a purely picturesque element not intended to be taken too seriously. We cannot, however, recommend the definitely comic poems. They are very depressing.

Mr. John Renton Denning dedicates his book to the Duke of Connaught, who is Colonel-in-Chief of the Rifle Brigade, in which regiment Mr. Denning was once himself a private soldier. His poems show an ardent love of Keats and a profligate luxuriance of adjectives :

And I will build a bower for thee, sweet,
A verdurous shelter from the noonday heat,
 hick rustling ivy, broad and green, and shining,
With honeysuckle creeping up and twining
Its nectared sweetness round thee; violets
And daisies with their fringed coronets

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And the white bells of tiny valley lilies,
And golden-leaved narcissi—daffodillies
Shall grow around thy dwelling—luscious fare
Of fruit on which the sun has laughed ;

this is the immature manner of *Endymion* with a vengeance and is not to be encouraged. Still, Mr. Denning is not always so anxious to reproduce the faults of his master. Sometimes he writes with wonderful grace and charm. *Sylvia*, for instance, is an exceedingly pretty poem, and *The Exile* has many powerful and picturesque lines. Mr. Denning should make a selection of his poems and publish them in better type and on better paper. The 'get-up' of his volume, to use the slang phrase of our young poets, is very bad indeed, and reflects no credit on the press of the Education Society of Bombay.

The best poem in Mr. Joseph McKim's little book is, undoubtedly, *William the Silent*. It is written in the spirited Macaulay style :

Awake, awake, ye burghers brave ! shout, shout for joy and sing !
With thirty thousand at his back comes forth your hero King.
Now shake for ever from your necks the servile yoke of Spain,
And raise your arms and end for aye false Alva's cruel reign.
Ho ! Maestricht, Liège, Brussels fair ! pour forth your warriors
brave,
And join your hands with him who comes your hearths and homes
to save.

Some people like this style.

Mrs. Horace Dobell, who has arrived at her seventeenth volume of poetry, seems very angry with everybody, and writes poems to *A Human Toad* with lurid and mysterious footnotes such as—
'Yet some one, *not* a friend of — *did!* on a certain occasion of a glib utterance of calumnies,

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by —— ! at Hampstead.' Here indeed is a Soul's Tragedy.

'In many cases I have deliberately employed alliteration, believing that the music of a line is intensified thereby,' says Mr. Kelly in the preface to his poems, and there is certainly no reason why Mr. Kelly should not employ this 'artful aid.' Alliteration is one of the many secrets of English poetry, and as long as it is kept a secret it is admirable. Mr. Kelly, it must be admitted, uses it with becoming modesty and reserve and never suffers it to trammel the white feet of his bright and buoyant muse. His volume is, in many ways, extremely interesting. Most minor poets are at their best in sonnets, but with him it is not so. His sonnets are too narrative, too diffuse, and too lyrical. They lack concentration, and concentration is the very essence of a sonnet. His longer poems, on the other hand, have many good qualities. We do not care for *Psychossolles*, which is elaborately commonplace, but *The Flight of Calliope* has many charming passages. It is a pity that Mr. Kelly has included the poems written before the age of nineteen. Youth is rarely original.

Andiatoroctè is the title of a volume of poems by the Rev. Clarence Walworth, of Albany, N.Y. It is a word borrowed from the Indians, and should, we think, be returned to them as soon as possible. The most curious poem of the book is called *Scenes at the Holy Home*:

Jesus and Joseph at work ! Hurra !
Sight never to see again,
A prentice Deity plies the saw,
While the Master ploughs with the plane.

Poems of this kind were popular in the Middle

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Ages when the cathedrals of every Christian country served as its theatres. They are anachronisms now, and it is odd that they should come to us from the United States. In matters of this kind we should have some protection.

(1) *Lays and Legends*. By E. Nesbit. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(2) *Rebecca the Witch and Other Tales*. By David Skata Foster. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

(3) *Poems and Songs*. By John Renton Denning. (Bombay: Education Society's Press.)

(4) *Poems*. By Joseph McKim. (Kegan Paul.)

(5) *In the Witches of the Night*. Poems in eighteen volumes. By Mrs. Horace Dobell. Vol. xvii. (Remington and Co.)

(6) *Poems*. By James Kelly. (Glasgow: Reid and Coghill.)

(7) *Andiatoroctè*. By the Rev. Clarence A. Walworth. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

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(*Woman's World*, December 1888.)

IF I were king,' says Mr. Henley, in one of his most modest rondeaus,

'Art should aspire, yet ugliness be dear;
Beauty, the shaft, should speed with wit for feather;
And love, sweet love, should never fall to sere,
If I were king.'

And these lines contain, if not the best criticism of his own work, certainly a very complete statement of his aim and motive as a poet. His little *Book of Verses* reveals to us an artist who is seeking to find new methods of expression and has not merely a delicate sense of beauty and a brilliant, fantastic wit, but a real passion also for what is horrible, ugly, or grotesque. No doubt, everything that is worthy of existence is worthy also of art—at least, one would like to think so—but while echo or mirror can repeat for us a beautiful thing, to render artistically a thing

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that is ugly requires the most exquisite alchemy of form, the most subtle magic of transformation. To me there is more of the cry of Marsyas than of the singing of Apollo in the earlier poems of Mr. Henley's volume, *In Hospital: Rhymes and Rhythms*, as he calls them. But it is impossible to deny their power. Some of them are like bright, vivid pastels; others like charcoal drawings, with dull blacks and murky whites; others like etchings with deeply-bitten lines, and abrupt contrasts, and clever colour-suggestions. In fact, they are like anything and everything, except perfected poems—that they certainly are not. They are still in the twilight. They are preludes, experiments, inspired jottings in a note-book, and should be heralded by a design of 'Genius Making Sketches.' Rhyme gives architecture as well as melody to verse: it gives that delightful sense of limitation which in all the arts is so pleasurable, and is, indeed, one of the secrets of perfection; it will whisper, as a French critic has said, 'things unexpected and charming, things with strange and remote relations to each other,' and bind them together in indissoluble bonds of beauty; and in his constant rejection of rhyme, Mr. Henley seems to me to have abdicated half his power. He is a *roi en exil* who has thrown away some of the strings of his lute; a poet who has forgotten the fairest part of his kingdom.

However, all work criticises itself. Here is one of Mr. Henley's inspired jottings. According to the temperament of the reader, it will serve either as a model or as the reverse:

As with varnish red and glistening
Dripped his hair; his feet were rigid;
Raised, he settled stiltly sideways:
You could see the hurts were spinal.

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He had fallen from an engine,
And been dragged along the metals.
It was hopeless, and they knew it;
So they covered him, and left him.

As he lay, by fits half sentient,
Inarticulately moaning,
With his stockinged feet protruded
Sharp and awkward from the blankets,

To his bed there came a woman,
Stood and looked and sighed a little,
And departed without speaking,
As himself a few hours after.

I was told she was his sweetheart.
They were on the eve of marriage.
She was quiet as a statue,
But her lip was gray and writhen.

In this poem, the rhythm and the music, such as it is, are obvious—perhaps a little too obvious. In the following I see nothing but ingeniously printed prose. It is a description—and a very accurate one—of a scene in a hospital ward. The medical students are supposed to be crowding round the doctor. What I quote is only a fragment, but the poem itself is a fragment:

So shows the ring
Seen, from behind, round a conjuror
Doing his pitch in the street.
High shoulders, low shoulders, broad shoulders, narrow ones,
Round, square, and angular, serry and shove;
While from within a voice,
Gravely and weightily fluent,
Sounds; and then ceases; and suddenly
(Look at the stress of the shoulders!)
Out of a quiver of silence,
Over the hiss of the spray,
Comes a low cry, and the sound
Of breath quick intaken through teeth
Clenched in resolve. And the master

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Breaks from the crowd, and goes,
Wiping his hands,
To the next bed, with his pupils
Flocking and whispering behind him.

Now one can see.

Case Number One

Sits (rather pale) with his bedclothes
Stripped up, and showing his foot
(Alas, for God's image!)
Swaddled in wet white lint
Brilliantly hideous with red.

Théophile Gautier once said that Flaubert's style was meant to be read, and his own style to be looked at. Mr. Henley's unrhymed rhythms form very dainty designs, from a typographical point of view. From the point of view of literature, they are a series of vivid, concentrated impressions, with a keen grip of fact, a terrible actuality, and an almost masterly power of picturesque presentation. But the poetic form—what of that?

Well, let us pass to the later poems, to the rondels and rondeaus, the sonnets and quatorzains, the echoes and the ballades. How brilliant and fanciful this is! The Toyokuni colour-print that suggested it could not be more delightful. It seems to have kept all the wilful fantastic charm of the original:

Was I a Samurai renowned,
Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
A histrion angular and profound?
A priest? a porter?—Child, although
I have forgotten clean, I know
That in the shade of Fujisan,
What time the cherry-orchards blow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

As here you loiter, flowing-gowned
And hugely sashed, with pins a-row
Your quaint head as with flamelets crowned,
Demure, inviting—even so,

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When merry maids in Miyako
To feel the sweet o' the year began,
And green gardens to overflow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

Clear shine the hills; the rice-fields round
Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow,
A blue canal the lake's blue bound
Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and lo!
Touched with the sundown's spirit and glow,
I see you turn, with flitted fan,
Against the plum-tree's bloomy snow . . .
I loved you once in old Japan!

ENVOY.

Dear, 'twas a dozen lives ago;
But that I was a lucky man
The Toyokuni here will show:
I loved you—once—in old Japan!

This rondel, too—how light it is, and graceful!—

We'll to the woods and gather may
Fresh from the footprints of the rain.
We'll to the woods, at every vein
To drink the spirit of the day.

The winds of spring are out at play,
The needs of spring in heart and brain.
We'll to the woods and gather may
Fresh from the footprints of the rain.

The world's too near her end, you say?
Hark to the blackbird's mad refrain!
It waits for her, the vast Inane?
Then, girls, to help her on the way
We'll to the woods and gather may.

There are fine verses, also, scattered through this
little book; some of them very strong, as—

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

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It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

Others with a true touch of romance, as—

Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a king in Babylon,
And you were a Christian slave.

And here and there we come across such felicitous phrases as—

In the sand
The gold prow-griffin claws a hold,

or—

The spires
Shine and are changed,

and many other graceful or fanciful lines, even 'the green sky's minor thirds' being perfectly right in its place, and a very refreshing bit of affectation in a volume where there is so much that is natural.

However, Mr. Henley is not to be judged by samples. Indeed, the most attractive thing in the book is no single poem that is in it, but the strong humane personality that stands behind both flawless and faulty work alike, and looks out through many masks, some of them beautiful, and some grotesque, and not a few misshapen. In the case with most of our modern poets, when we have analysed them down to an adjective, we can go no further, or we care to go no further; but with this book it is different. Through these reeds and pipes blows the very breath of life. It seems as if one could put one's hand upon the singer's heart and count its pulsations. There is something wholesome, virile and sane about the man's soul. Anybody can be

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reasonable, but to be sane is not common ; and sane poets are as rare as blue lilies, though they may not be quite so delightful.

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow ;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare,
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow,
What is to come,

is the concluding stanza of the last rondeau—indeed, of the last poem in the collection, and the high, serene temper displayed in these lines serves at once as keynote and keystone to the book. The very lightness and slighness of so much of the work, its careless moods and casual fancies, seem to suggest a nature that is not primarily interested in art—a nature, like Sordello's, passionately enamoured of life, one to which lyre and lute are things of less importance. From this mere joy of living, this frank delight in experience for its own sake, this lofty indifference, and momentary unregretted ardours, come all the faults and all the beauties of the volume. But there is this difference between them—the faults are deliberate, and the result of much study ; the beauties have the air of fascinating impromptus. Mr. Henley's healthy, if sometimes misapplied, confidence in the myriad suggestions of life gives him his charm. He is made to sing along the highways, not to sit down and write. If he took himself more seriously, his work would become trivial.

Mr. William Sharp takes himself very seriously and has written a preface to his *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*, which is, on the whole, the most interesting part of his volume. We are all, it

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seems, far too cultured, and lack robustness. 'There are those amongst us,' says Mr. Sharp, 'who would prefer a dexterously-turned triolet to such apparently uncouth measures as *Thomas the Rhymer*, or the ballad of *Clerk Saunders*: who would rather listen to the drawing-room music of the Villanelle than to the wild harp-playing by the mill-dams o' Binnorie, or the sigh of the night-wind o'er drumly Annan water.' Such an expression as 'the drawing-room music of the Villanelle' is not very happy, and I cannot imagine any one with the smallest pretensions to culture preferring a dexterously turned triolet to a fine imaginative ballad, as it is only the Philistine who ever dreams of comparing works of art that are absolutely different in motive, in treatment, and in form. If English Poetry is in danger—and, according to Mr. Sharp, the poor nymph is in a very critical state—what she has to fear is not the fascination of dainty metre or delicate form, but the predominance of the intellectual spirit over the spirit of beauty. Lord Tennyson dethroned Wordsworth as a literary influence, and later on Mr. Swinburne filled all the mountain valleys with echoes of his own song. The influence to-day is that of Mr. Browning. And as for the triolets, and the rondels, and the careful study of metrical subtleties, these things are merely the signs of a desire for perfection in small things and of the recognition of poetry as an art. They have had certainly one good result—they have made our minor poets readable, and have not left us entirely at the mercy of geniuses.

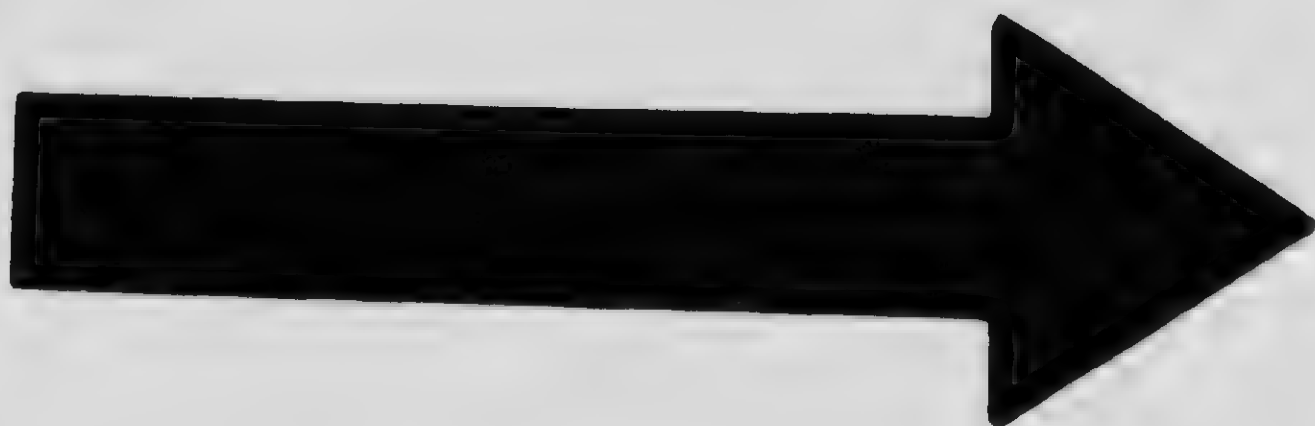
But, says Mr. Sharp, every one is far too literary; even Rossetti is too literary. What we want is simplicity and directness of utterance; these should be the dominant characteristics of poetry. Well, is

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that quite so certain? Are simplicity and directness of utterance absolute essentials for poetry? I think not. They may be admirable for the drama, admirable for all those imitative forms of literature that claim to mirror life in its externals and its accidents, admirable for quiet narrative, admirable in their place; but their place is not everywhere. Poetry has many modes of music; she does not blow through one pipe alone. Directness of utterance is good, but so is the subtle recasting of thought into a new and delightful form. Simplicity is good, but complexity, mystery, strangeness, symbolism, obscurity even, these have their value. Indeed, properly speaking, there is no such thing as Style; there are merely styles, that is all.

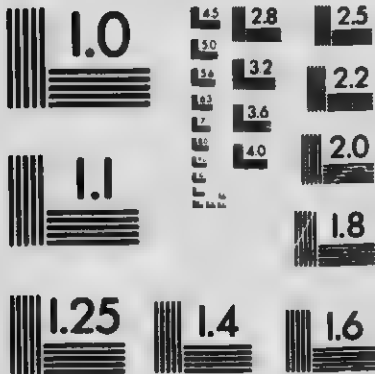
One cannot help feeling also that everything that Mr. Sharp says in his preface was said at the beginning of the century by Wordsworth, only where Wordsworth called us back to nature, Mr. Sharp invites us to woo romance. Romance, he tells us, is 'in the air.' A new romantic movement is imminent. 'I anticipate,' he says, 'that many of our poets, especially those of the youngest generation, will shortly turn towards the "ballad" as a poetic vehicle: and that the next year or two will see much romantic poetry.'

The ballad! Well, Mr. Andrew Lang, some months ago, signed the death-warrant of the ballade, and—though I hope that in this respect Mr. Lang resembles the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, whose bloodthirsty orders were by general consent never carried into execution—it must be admitted that the number of ballades given to us by some of our poets was, perhaps, a little excessive. But the ballad? *Sir Patrick Spens, Clerk Saunders, Thomas the*



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Rhymer—are these to be our archetypes, our models, the sources of our inspiration? They are certainly great imaginative poems. In Chatterton's *Ballad of Charity*, Coleridge's *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, the *La Belle Dame sans Merci* of Keats, the *Sister Helen* of Rossetti, we can see what marvellous works of art the spirit of old romance may fashion. But to preach a spirit is one thing, to propose a form is another. It is true that Mr. Sharp warns the rising generation against imitation. A ballad, he reminds them, does not necessarily denote a poem in quatrains and in antique language. But his own poems, as I think will be seen later, are, in their way, warnings, and show the danger of suggesting any definite 'poetic vehicle.' And, further, are simplicity and directness of utterance really the dominant characteristics of these old imaginative ballads that Mr. Sharp so enthusiastically, and, in some particulars, so wisely praises? It does not seem to me to be so. We are always apt to think that the voices which sang at the dawn of poetry were simpler, fresher, and more natural than ours, and that the world which the early poets looked at, and through which they walked, had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and could pass, almost without changing, into song. The snow lies thick now upon Olympus, and its scarped sides are bleak and barren, but once, we fancy, the white feet of the Muses brushed the dew from the anemones in the morning, and at evening came Apollo to sing to the shepherds in the vale. But in this we are merely lending to other ages what we desire, or think we desire, for our own. Our historical sense is at fault. Every century that produces poetry is, so far, an artificial century, and the work that seems to us

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the most natural and simple product of its time is probably the result of the most deliberate and self-conscious effort. For Nature is always behind the age. It takes a great artist to be thoroughly modern.

Let us turn to the poems, which have really only the preface to blame for their somewhat late appearance. The best is undoubtedly *The Weird of Michael Scott*, and these stanzas are a fair example of its power:

Then Michael Scott laughed long and loud:
'Whan shone the mune ahint yon cloud
I speered the towers that saw my birth—
Lang, lang, sall wait my cauld grey shroud,
Lang cauld and weet my bed o' earth!'

But as by Stair he rode full speed
His horse began to pant and bleed;
'Win hame, win hame, my bonnie mare,
Win hame if thou wouldst rest and feed,
Win hame, we're nigh the House of Stair!'

But, with a shrill heart-bursten yell
The white horse stumbled, plunged, and fell,
And loud a summoning voice arose,
'Is't White-Horse Death that rides frae Hell,
Or Michael Scott that hereby goes?'

'Ah, Laird of Stair, I ken ye weel!
Avaunt, or I your saul sall steal,
An' send ye howling through the wood
A wild man-wolf—aye, ye maun reel
An' cry upon your Holy Rood!'

There is a good deal of vigour, no doubt, in these lines; but one cannot help asking whether this is to be the common tongue of the future Renaissance of Romance. Are we all to talk Scotch, and to speak of the moon as the 'mune,' and the soul as the 'saul'? I hope not. And yet if this Renais-

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sance is to be a vital, living thing, it must have its linguistic side. Just as the spiritual development of music, and the artistic development of painting, have always been accompanied, if not occasioned, by the discovery of some new instrument or some fresh medium, so, in the case of any important literary movement, half of its strength resides in its language. If it does not bring with it a rich and novel mode of expression, it is doomed either to sterility or to imitation. Dialect, archaisms and the like, will not do. Take, for instance, another poem of Mr. Sharp's, a poem which he calls *The Death-Tide* :

The weet saut wind is blawing
Upon the misty shore :
As, like a stormy snawing,
The deid go streaming o'er :—
The wan drown'd deid sail wildly
Frae out each drumly wave :
It's O and O for the weary sea,
And O for a quiet grave.

This is simply a very clever *pastiche*, nothing more, and our language is not likely to be permanently enriched by such words as 'weet,' 'saut,' 'blawing,' and 'snawing.' Even 'drumly,' an adjective of which Mr. Sharp is so fond that he uses it both in prose and verse, seems to me to be hardly an adequate basis for a new romantic movement.

However, Mr. Sharp does not always write in dialect. *The Son of Allan* can be read without any difficulty, and *Phantasy* can be read with pleasure. They are both very charming poems in their way, and none the less charming because the cadences of the one recall *Sister Helen*, and the motive

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of the other reminds us of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. But those who wish thoroughly to enjoy Mr. Sharp's poems should not read his preface; just as those who approve of the preface should avoid reading the poems. I cannot help saying that I think the preface a great mistake. The work that follows it is quite inadequate, and there seems little use in heralding a dawn that rose long ago, and proclaiming a Renaissance whose first-fruits, if we are to judge them by any high standard of perfection, are of so ordinary a character.

Miss Mary Robinson has also written a preface to her little volume, *Poems, Ballads, and a Garden Play*, but the preface is not very serious, and does not propose any drastic change or any immediate revolution in English literature. Miss Robinson's poems have always the charm of delicate music and graceful expression; but they are, perhaps, weakest where they try to be strong, and certainly least satisfying where they seek to satisfy. Her fanciful flower-crowned Muse, with her tripping steps and pretty, wilful ways, should not write Antiphons to the Unknowable, or try to grapple with abstract intellectual problems. Hers is not the hand to unveil mysteries, nor hers the strength for the solving of secrets. She should never leave her garden, and as for her wandering out into the desert to ask the Sphinx questions, that should be sternly forbidden to her. Dürer's *Melancholia*, that serves as the frontispiece to this dainty book, looks sadly out of place. Her seat is with the sibyls, not with the nymphs. What has she to do with shepherdesses piping about Darwinism and 'The Eternal Mind'?

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However, if the *Songs of the Inner Life* are not very successful, the *Spring Songs* are delightful. They follow each other like wind-blown petals, and make one feel how much more charming flower is than fruit, apple-blossom than apple. There are some artistic temperaments that should never come to maturity, that should always remain in the region of promise and should dread autumn with its harvesting more than winter with its frosts. Such seems to me the temperament that this volume reveals. The first poem of the second series, *La Belle au Bois Dormant*, is worth all the more serious and thoughtful work, and has far more chance of being remembered. It is not always to high aim and lofty ambition that the prize is given. If Daphne had gone to meet Apollo, she would never have known what laurels are.

From these fascinating spring lyrics and idylls we pass to the romantic ballads. One artistic faculty Miss Robinson certainly possesses—the faculty of imitation. There is an element of imitation in all the arts; it is to be found in literature as much as in painting, and the danger of valuing it too little is almost as great as the danger of setting too high a value upon it. To catch, by dainty mimicry, the very mood and manner of antique work, and yet to retain that touch of modern passion without which the old form would be dull and empty; to win from long-silent lips some faint echo of their music, and to add to it a music of one's own; to take the mode and fashion of a bygone age, and to experiment with it, and search curiously for its possibilities; there is a pleasure in all this. It is a kind of literary acting, and has something of the charm of the art of the stage-player. And how well, on the whole, Miss

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Robinson does it! Here is the opening of the ballad of Rudel:

There was in all the world of France
No singer half so sweet :
The first note of his viol brought
A crowd into the street.
He stepped as young, and bright, and glad
As Angel Gabriel.
And only when we heard him sing
Our eyes forgot Rudel.
And as he sat in Avignon,
With princes at their wine,
In all that lusty company
Was none so fresh and fine.
His kirtle's of the Arras-blue,
His cap of pearls and green ;
His golden curls fall tumbling round
The fairest face I've seen.

How Gautier would have liked this from the same poem!—

Hew the timbers of sandal-wood,
And planks of ivory ;
Rear up the shining masts of gold,
And let us put to sea.
Sew the sails with a silken thread
That all are silken too ;
Sew them with scarlet pomegranates
Upon a sheet of blue.
Rig the ship with a rope of gold
And let us put to sea.
And now, good-bye to good Marseilles,
And hey for Tripoli!

The ballad of the Duke of Gueldres's wedding is very clever :

'O welcome, Mary Harcourt,
Thrice welcome, lady mine ;
There's not a knight in all the world
Shall be as true as thine.

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'There's venison in the aumbry, Mary,
There's claret in the vat;
Come in, and breakfast in the hall
Where once my mother sat!'

O red, red is the wine that flows,
And sweet the minstrel's play,
But white is Mary Harcourt
Upon her wedding-day.

O many are the wedding guests
That sit on either side;
But pale below her crimson flowers
And homesick is the bride.

Miss Robinson's critical sense is at once too sound and too subtle to allow her to think that any great Renaissance of Romance will necessarily follow from the adoption of the ballad-form in poetry; but her work in this style is very pretty and charming, and *The Tower of St. Maur*, which tells of the father who built up his little son in the wall of his castle in order that the foundations should stand sure, is admirable in its way. The few touches of archaism in language that she introduces are quite sufficient for their purpose, and though she fully appreciates the importance of the Celtic spirit in literature, she does not consider it necessary to talk of 'blawing' and 'snawing.' As for the garden play, *Our Lady of the Broken Heart*, as it is called, the bright, birdlike snatches of song that break in here and there—as the singing does in *Pippa Passes*—form a very welcome relief to the somewhat ordinary movement of the blank verse, and suggest to us again where Miss Robinson's real power lies. Not a poet in the true creative sense, she is still a very perfect artist in poetry, using language as one might use a very precious material, and producing her best work by the

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rejection of the great themes and large intellectual motives that belong to fuller and richer song. When she essays such themes, she certainly fails. Her instrument is the reed, not the lyre. Only those should sing of Death whose song is stronger than Death is.

The collected poems of the author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*, have a pathetic interest as the artistic record of a very gracious and comely life. They bring us back to the days when Philip Bourke Marston was young—'Philip, my King,' as she called him in the pretty poem of that name; to the days of the Great Exhibition, with the universal piping about peace; to those later terrible Crimean days, when Alma and Balaclava were words on the lips of our poets; and to days when Leonora was considered a very romantic name.

Leonora, Leonora,
How the word rolls—*Leonora*.
Lion-like in full-mouthed sound,
Marching o'er the meiric ground,
With a tawny tread sublime.
So your name moves, Leonora,
Down my desert rhyme.

Mrs. Craik's best poems are, on the whole, those that are written in blank verse; and these, though not prosaic, remind one that prose was her true medium of expression. But some of the rhymed poems have considerable merit. These may serve as examples of Mrs. Craik's style:

A SKETCH

Dost thou thus love me, O thou all beloved,
In whose large store the very meanest coin
Would out-buy my whole wealth? Yet here thou comest
Like a kind heiress from her purple and down

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Uprising, who for pity cannot sleep,
But goes forth to the stranger at her gate—
The beggared stranger at her beauteous gate—
And clothes and feeds; scarce blest till she has blest.

But dost thou love me, O thou pure of heart,
Whose very looks are prayers? What couldst thou see
In this forsaken pool by the yew-wood's side,
To sit down at its bank, and dip thy hand,
Saying, 'It is so clear!'—and lo! ere long,
Its blackness caught the shimmer of thy wings
Its slimes slid downward from thy stainless palm,
Its depths grew still, that there thy form might rise.

THE NOVICE

It is near morning. Ere the next night fall
I shall be made the bride of heaven. Then home
To my still marriage-chamber I shall come,
And spouseless, childless, watch the slow years crawl

These lips will never meet a softer touch
Than the stone crucifix I kiss; no child
Will clasp this neck. Ah, virgin-mother mild,
Thy painted bliss will mock me overmuch.

This is the last time I shall twist the hair
My mother's hand wrea'ed, till in dust she lay:
The name, her name given on my baptism day,
This is the last time I shall ever bear.

O weary world, O heavy life, farewell!
Like a tired child that creeps into the dark
To sob itself asleep, where none will mark,—
So creep I to my silent convent cell.

Friends, lovers whom I loved not, kindly hearts
Who grieve that I should enter this still door,
Grieve not. Closing behind me evermore,
Me from all anguish, as all joy, it parts.

The volume chronicles the moods of a sweet and thoughtful nature, and though many things in it may seem somewhat old-fashioned, it is still very

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD'S LAST VOLUME

pleasant to read and has a faint perfume of withered rose-leaves about it.

(1) *A Book of Verses.* By William Ernest Henley. (David Nutt.)

(2) *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy.* By William Sharp. (Walter Scott.)

(3) *Poems, Ballads, and a Garden Play.* By A. Mary F. Robinson. (Fisher Unwin.)

(4) *Poems.* By the Author of *John Halifax, Gentleman.* (Macmillan and Co.)

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(*Pull Mall Gazette*, December 11, 1888.)

WRITERS of poetical prose are rarely good poets. They may crowd their page with gorgeous epithet and resplendent phrase, may pile Pelions of adjectives upon Ossas of descriptions, may abandon themselves to highly coloured diction and rich luxuriance of imagery, but if their verse lacks the true rhythmical life of verse, if their method is devoid of the self-restraint of the real artist, all their efforts are of very little avail. 'Asiatic' prose is possibly useful for journalistic purposes, but 'Asiatic' poetry is not to be encouraged. Indeed, poetry may be said to need far more self-restraint than prose. Its conditions are more exquisite. It produces its effects by more subtle means. It must not be allowed to degenerate into mere rhetoric or mere eloquence. It is, in one sense, the most self-conscious of all the arts, as it is never a means to an end but always an end in itself. Sir Edwin Arnold has a very picturesque or, perhaps we should say, a very pictorial style. He knows India better than any living Englishman knows it, and Hindoostanee better than any English writer should

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know it. If his descriptions lack distinction, they have at least the merit of being true, and when he does not interlard his pages with an interminable and intolerable series of foreign words he is pleasant enough. But he is not a poet. He is simply a poetical writer—that is all.

However, poetical writers have their uses, and there is a good deal in Sir Edwin Arnold's last volume that will repay perusal. The scene of the story is placed in a mosque attached to the monument of the Taj-Mahal, and a group composed of a learned Mirza, two singing girls with their attendant, and an Englishman, is supposed to pass the night there reading the chapter of Sa'di upon 'Love,' and conversing upon that theme with accompaniments of music and dancing. The Englishman is, of course, Sir Edwin Arnold himself:

lover of India,
Too much her lover! for his heart lived there
How far soever wandered thence his feet.

Lady Dufferin appears as

Lady Duffreen, the mighty Queen's Vice-queen!

which is really one of the most dreadful blank-verse lines that we have come across for some time past. M. Renan is 'a priest of Frangestan,' who writes in 'glittering French'; Lord Tennyson is

One we honour for his songs—
Greater than Sa'di's self—

and the Darwinians appear as the 'Mollahs of the West,' who

hold Adam's sons
Sprung of the sea-slug.

All this is excellent fooling in its way, a kind of

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play-acting in literature; but the best parts of the book are the descriptions of the Taj itself, which are extremely elaborate, and the various translations from Sa'di with which the volume is interspersed. The great monument Shah Jahan built for Arjmand is

Instinct with loveliness—not masonry!
Not architecture! as all others are,
But the proud passion of an Emperour's love
Wrought into living stone, which gleams and soars
With body of beauty shringing soul and thought,
Insomuch that it haps as when some face
Divinely fair unveils before our eyes—
Some woman beautiful unspeakably—
And the blood quickens, and the spirit leaps,
And will to worship bends the half-yielded knee;
Which breath forgets to breathe: so is the Taj;
You see it with the heart, before the eyes
Have scope to gaze. All white! snow white! cloud white!

We cannot say much in praise of the sixth line:

Insomuch that it haps as when some face:

it is curiously awkward and unmusical. But this passage from Sa'di is remarkable:

When Earth, bewildered, shook in earthquake-throes,
With mountain-roots He bound her borders close;
Turkis and ruby in her rocks He stored,
And on her green branch hung His crimson rose.

He shapes dull seed to fair imaginings;
Who paints with moisture as He painteth things?
Look! from the cloud He sheds one drop on ocean,
As from the Father's loins one drop He brings;—

And out of that He forms a peerless pearl,
And, out of this, a cypress boy or girl;
Utterly wotting all their innermosts,
For all to Him is visible! Uncurl

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Your cold coils, Snakes! Creep forth, ye thrifty Ants!
 Handless and strengthless He provides your wants
 Who from the 'Is not' planned the 'Is to be,'
 And Life in non-existent void implants.

Sir Edwin Arnold suffers, of course, from the inevitable comparison that one cannot help making between his work and the work of Edward Fitzgerald, and certainly Fitzgerald could never have written such a line as 'utterly wotting all their innermosts,' but it is interesting to read almost any translation of those wonderful Oriental poets with their strange blending of philosophy and sensuousness, of simple parable or fable and obscure mystic utterance. What we regret most in Sir Edwin Arnold's book is his habit of writing in what really amounts to a sort of 'pigeon English.' When we are told that 'Lady Duffreen, the mighty Queen's Vice-queen,' paces among the *charpoys* of the ward 'no whit afraid of *sitla*, or of *tap*'; when the Mirza explains—

Ag lejao!

To light the kallians for the Saheb and me,

and the attendant obeys with '*Achcha! Achcha!*' when we are invited to listen to 'the *Vina* and the drum' and told about *ekkas*, *Byrágis*, *hamals* and *Tamboora*, all that we can say is that to such *ghazals* we are not prepared to say either *Shamash* or *Afrín*. In English poetry we do not want

chatkis for the toes,

Jasams for elbow-bands, and *gote* and *har*,

Bala and *mala*.

This is not local colour; it is a sort of local discoloration. It does not add anything to the vividness of the scene. It does not bring the Orient more clearly before us. It is simply an inconveni-

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ence to the reader and a mistake on the part of the writer. It may be difficult for a poet to find English synonyms for Asiatic expressions, but even if it were impossible it is none the less a poet's duty to find them. We are sorry that a scholar and a man of culture like Sir Edwin Arnold should have been guilty of what is really an act of treason against our literature. But for this error, his book, though not in any sense a work of genius or even of high artistic merit, would still have been of some enduring value. As it is, Sir Edwin Arnold has translated Sa'di and some one must translate Sir Edwin Arnold.

With Sa'di in the Garden ; or The Book of Love. By Sir Edwin Arnold, M.A., K.C.I.E., Author of *The Light of Asia*, etc. (Trübner and Co.)

AUSTRALIAN POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 14, 1888.)

MR. SLADEN dedicates his anthology (or, perhaps, we should say his herbarium) of Australian song to Mr. Edmund Gosse, 'whose exquisite critical faculty is,' he tells us, 'as conspicuous in his poems as in his lectures on poetry.' After so graceful a compliment Mr. Gosse must certainly deliver a series of discourses upon Antipodean art before the Cambridge undergraduates, who will, no doubt, be very much interested on hearing about Gordon, Kendall and Domett, to say nothing of the extraordinary collection of mediocrities whom Mr. Sladen has somewhat ruthlessly dragged from their modest and well-merited obscurity. Gordon, however, is very badly represented in Mr. Sladen's book, the only three specimens of his work that are included being an unrevised fragment, his *Valedictory*

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Poem and *An Exile's Farewell*. The latter is, of course, touching, but then the commonplace always touches, and it is a great pity that Mr. Sladen was unable to come to any financial arrangement with the holders of Gordon's copyright. The loss to the volume that now lies before us is quite irreparable. Through Gordon Australia found her first fine utterance in song.

Still, there are some other singers here well worth studying, and it is interesting to read about poets who lie under the shadow of the gum-tree, gather wattle blossoms and buddawong and sarsaparilla for their loves, and wander through the glades of Mount Baw-baw listening to the careless raptures of the mopoke. To them November is

The wonder with the golden wings,
Who lays one hand in Summer's, one in Spring's:

January is full of 'breaths of myrrh, and subtle hints of rose-lands';

She is the warm, live month of lustre—she
Makes glad the land and lulls the strong sad sea;

while February is 'the true Demeter,' and

With rich warm vine-blood splashed from heel to knee,
Comes radiant through the yellow woodlands.

Each month, as it passes, calls for new praise and for music different from our own. July is a 'lady, born in wind and rain'; in August

Across the range, by every scarred black fell,
Strong Winter blows his horn of wild farewell;

while October is 'the queen of all the year,' the 'lady of the yellow hair,' who strays 'with blossom-trammelled feet' across the 'haughty-featured hills,' and brings the Spring with her. We must certainly try to accustom ourselves to the mopoke and the

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sarsaparilla plant, and to make the gum-tree and the buddawong as dear to us as the olives and the narcissi of white Colonus. After all, the Muses are great travellers, and the same foot that stirred the Cumnor cowslips may some day brush the fallen gold of the wattle blossoms and tread delicately over the tawny bush-grass.

Mr. Sladen has, of course, a great belief in the possibilities of Australian poetry. There are in Australia, he tells us, far more writers capable of producing good work than has been assumed. It is only natural, he adds, that this should be so, 'for Australia has one of those delightful climates conducive to rest in the open air. The middle of the day is so hot that it is really more healthful to lounge about than to take stronger exercise.' Well, lounging in the open air is not a bad school for poets, but it largely depends on the lounge. What strikes one on reading over Mr. Sladen's collection is the depressing provinciality of mood and manner in almost every writer. Page follows page, and we find nothing but echoes without music, reflections without beauty, second-rate magazine verses and third-rate verses for Colonial newspapers. Poe seems to have had some influence—at least, there are several parodies of his method—and one or two writers have read Mr. Swinburne; but, on the whole, we have artless Nature in her most irritating form. Of course Australia is young, younger even than America whose youth is now one of her oldest and most hallowed traditions, but the entire want of originality of treatment is curious. And yet not so curious, perhaps, after all. Youth is rarely original.

There are, however, some exceptions. Henry Clarence Kendall had a true poetic gift. The series

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of poems on the Austral months, from which we have already quoted, is full of beautiful things; Landor's *Rose Aylmer* is a classic in its way, but Kendall's *Rose Lorraine* is in parts not unworthy to be mentioned after it; and the poem entitled *Beyond Kerguelen* has a marvellous music about it, a wonderful rhythm of words and a real richness of utterance. Some of the lines are strangely powerful, and, indeed, in spite of its exaggerated alliteration, or perhaps in consequence of it, the whole poem is a most remarkable work of art.

Down in the South, by the waste without sail on it—
Far from the zone of the blossom and tree—
Lieth, with winter and whirlwind and wail on it,
Ghost of a land by the ghost of a sea.
Weird is the mist from the summit to base of it;
Sun of its heaven is wizened and grey;
Phantom of light is the light on the face of it—
Never is night on it, never is day!
Here is the shore without flower or bird on it;
Here is no litany sweet of the springs—
Only the haughty, harsh thunder is heard on it,
Only the storm, with a roar in its wings!

Back in the dawn of this beautiful sphere, on it—
Land of the dolorous, desolate face—
Beamed the blue day; and the beautiful year on it
Fostered the leaf and the blossom of grace.
Grand were the lights of its midsummer noon on it—
Mornings of majesty shone on its seas;
Glitter of star and the glory of moon on it
Fell, in the march of the musical breeze.
Valleys and hills, with the whisper of wing in them,
Dells of the daffodil—spaces impearled,
Flowered and flashed with the splendour of spring in them,
Back in the morn of this wonderful world.

Mr. Sladen speaks of Alfred Domett as 'the author of one of the great poems of a century in which Shelley and Keats, Byron and Scott, Words-

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worth and Tennyson have all flourished,' but the extracts he gives from *Ranolf* and *Amohia* hardly substantiate this claim, although the song of the Tree-God in the fourth book is clever but exasperating.

A Midsummer's Noon, by Charles Harpur, 'the grey forefather of Australian poetry,' is pretty and graceful, and Thomas Henry's *Wood-Notes* and Miss Veel's *Saturday Night* are worth reading; but, on the whole, the Australian poets are extremely dull and prosaic. There seem to be no sirens in the New World. As for Mr. Sladen himself, he has done his work very conscientiously. Indeed, in one instance he almost re-writes an entire poem in consequence of the manuscript having reached him in a mutilated condition.

A pleasant land is the land of dreams
At the back of the shining air!
It hath sunnier skies and sheenier streams,
And gardens than Earth's more fair,

is the first verse of this lucubration, and Mr. Sladen informs us with justifiable pride that the parts printed in italics are from his own pen! This is certainly editing with a vengeance, and we cannot help saying that it reflects more credit on Mr. Sladen's good nature than on his critical or his poetical powers. The appearance, also, in a volume of 'poems produced in Australia,' of selections from Horne's *Orion* cannot be defended, especially as we are given no specimen of the poetry Horne wrote during the time that he actually was in Australia, where he held the office of 'Warden of the Blue Mountains'—a position which, as far as the title goes, is the loveliest ever given to any poet, and would have suited Wordsworth admirably: Wordsworth, that is to say, at his best, for he not infre-

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quently wrote like the Distributor of Stamps. However, Mr. Sladen has shown great energy in the compilation of this bulky volume which, though it does not contain much that is of any artistic value, has a certain historical interest, especially for those who care to study the conditions of intellectual life in the colonies of a great empire. The biographical notices of the enormous crowd of verse-makers which is included in this volume are chiefly from the pen of Mr. Patchett Martin. Some of them are not very satisfactory. 'Formerly of West Australia, now residing at Boston, U.S. Has published several volumes of poetry,' is a ludicrously inadequate account of such a man as John Boyle O'Reilly, while in 'poet, essayist, critic, and journalist, one of the most prominent figures in literary London,' few will recognise the industrious Mr. William Sharp.

Still, on the whole, we should be grateful for a volume that has given us specimens of Kendall's work, and perhaps Mr. Sladen will some day produce an anthology of Australian poetry, not a herbarium of Australian verse. His present book has many good qualities, but it is almost unreadable.

Australian Poets, 1788-1888. Edited by Douglas B. W. Sladen, B.A. Oxon. (Griffith. Farran and Co.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES

I
(*Woman's World*, January 1889.)

IN a recent article on *English Poetesses*,¹ I ventured to suggest that our women of letters should turn their attention somewhat more to prose and somewhat less to poetry. Women seem to me to possess just what our litera-

¹ *The Queen*, December 8, 1888.

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ture wants—a light touch, a delicate hand, a graceful mode of treatment, and an unstudied felicity of phrase. We want some one who will do for our prose what Madame de Sévigné did for the prose of France. George Eliot's style was far too cumbrous, and Charlotte Brontë's too exaggerated. However, one must not forget that amongst the women of England there have been some charming letter-writers, and certainly no book can be more delightful reading than Mrs. Ross's *Three Generations of English Women*, which has recently appeared. The three Englishwomen whose memoirs and correspondence Mrs. Ross has so admirably edited are Mrs. John Taylor, Mrs. Sarah Austin, and Lady Duff Gordon, all of them remarkable personalities, and two of them women of brilliant wit and European reputation. Mrs. Taylor belonged to that great Norwich family about whom the Duke of Sussex remarked that they reversed the ordinary saying that it takes nine tailors to make a man, and was for many years one of the most distinguished figures in the famous society of her native town. Her only daughter married John Austin, the great authority on jurisprudence, and her *salon* in Paris was the centre of the intellect and culture of her day. Lucie Duff Gordon, the only child of John and Sarah Austin, inherited the talents of her parents. A beauty, a *femme d'esprit*, a traveller, and clever writer, she charmed and fascinated her age, and her premature death in Egypt was really a loss to our literature. It is to her daughter that we owe this delightful volume of memoirs.

First we are introduced to Mrs. Ross's great-grandmother, Mrs. Taylor, who 'was called, by her intimate friends, "Madame Roland of Norwich,"

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from her likeness to the portraits of the handsome and unfortunate Frenchwoman.' We hear of her darning her boy's grey worsted stockings while holding her own with Southey and Brougham, and dancing round the Tree of Liberty with Dr. Parr when the news of the fall of the Bastille was first known. Amongst her friends were Sir James Mackintosh, the most popular man of the day, 'to whom Madame de Staël wrote, "*Il n'y a pas de société sans vous.*" "*C'est très ennuyeux de dîner sans vous; la société ne va pas quand vous n'êtes pas là*";' Sir James Smith, the botanist; Crabb Robinson; the Gurneys; Mrs. Barbauld; Dr. Alderson and his charming daughter, Amelia Opie; and many other well-known people. Her letters are extremely sensible and thoughtful. 'Nothing at present,' she says in one of them, 'suits my taste so well as Susan's Latin lessons, and her philosophical old master. . . . When we get to Cicero's discussions on the nature of the soul, or Virgil's fine descriptions, my mind is filled up. Life is either a dull round of eating, drinking, and sleeping, or a spark of ethereal fire just kindled. . . . The character of girls must depend upon their reading as much as upon the company they keep. Besides the intrinsic pleasure to be derived from solid knowledge, a woman ought to consider it as her best resource against poverty.' This is a somewhat caustic aphorism: 'A romantic woman is a troublesome friend, as she expects you to be as imprudent as herself, and is mortified at what she calls coldness and insensibility.' And this is admirable: 'The art of life is not to estrange oneself from society, and yet not to pay too dear for it.' This, too, is good: 'Vanity, like curiosity, is wanted as a stimulus to

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exertion ; indolence would certainly get the better of us if it were not for these two powerful principles ; and there is a keen touch of humour in the following : ' Nothing is so gratifying as the idea that virtue and philanthropy are becoming fashionable.' Dr. James Martineau, in a letter to Mrs. Ross, gives us a pleasant picture of the old lady returning from market ' weighted by her huge basket, with the shank of a leg of mutton thrust out to betray its contents,' and talking divinely about philosophy, poets, politics, and every intellectual topic of the day. She was a woman of admirable good sense, a type of Roman matron, and quite as careful as were the Roman matrons to keep up the purity of her native tongue.

Mrs. Taylor, however, was more or less limited to Norwich. Mrs. Austin was for the world. In London, Paris, and Germany, she ruled and dominated society, loved by every one who knew her. ' She is " My best and brightest " to Lord Jeffrey ; " Dear, fair and wise " to Sydney Smith ; " My great ally " to Sir James Stephen ; " Sunlight through waste weltering chaos " to Thomas Carlyle (while he needed her aid) ; " La petite mère du genre humain " to Michael Chevalier ; " Liebes Mütterlein " to John Stuart Mill ; and " My own Professorin " to Charles Buller, to whom she taught German, as well as to the sons of Mr. James Mill.' Jeremy Bentham, when on his deathbed, gave her a ring with his portrait and some of his hair let in behind. ' There, my dear,' he said, ' it is the only ring I ever gave a woman.' She corresponded with Guizot, Barthélemy de St. Hilaire, the Grotes, Dr. Whewell, the Master of Trinity, Nassau Senior, the Duchesse d'Orléans, Victor Cousin, and many other distin-

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guished people. Her translation of Ranke's *History of the Popes* is admirable; indeed, all her literary work was thoroughly well done, and her edition of her husband's *Province of Jurisprudence* deserves the very highest praise. Two people more unlike than herself and her husband it would have been difficult to find. He was habitually grave and despondent; she was brilliantly handsome, fond of society, in which she shone, and 'with an almost superabundance of energy and animal spirits,' Mrs. Ross tells us. She married him because she thought him perfect, but he never produced the work of which he was worthy, and of which she knew him to be worthy. Her estimate of him in the preface to the *Jurisprudence* is wonderfully striking and simple. 'He was never sanguine. He was intolerant of any imperfection. He was always under the control of severe love of truth. He lived and died a poor man.' She was terribly disappointed in him, but she loved him. Some years after his death, she wrote to M. Guizot:

In the intervals of my study of his works I read his letters to me—*forty-five years of love-letters*, the last as tender and passionate as the first. And how full of noble sentiments! 'The midday of our lives was clouded and stormy, full of cares and disappointments; but the sunset was bright and serene—as bright as the morning, and more serene. Now it is night with me, and must remain so till the dawn of another day. I am always alone—that is, *I live with him*.'

The most interesting letters in the book are certainly those to M. Guizot, with whom she maintained the closest intellectual friendship; but there is hardly one of them that does not contain something clever, or thoughtful, or witty, while those addressed to her, in turn, are very interesting.

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Carlyle writes her letters full of lamentations, the wail of a Titan in pain, superbly exaggerated for literary effect.

Literature, one's sole craft and staff of life, lies broken in obeysance; what room for music amid the braying of innumerable jackasses, the howling of innumerable hyænas whetting the tooth to eat them up? Alas for it! it is a sick disjointed time; neither shall we ever mend it; at best let us hope to mend ourselves. I declare I sometimes think of throwing down the Pen altogether as a worthless weapon; and leading out a colony of these poor starving Drudges to the waste places of their old Mother Earth, when for sweat of their brow bread *will* rise for them; it were perhaps the worthiest service that at this moment could be rendered our old world to throw open for it the doors of the New. Thither must they come at last, 'bursts of eloquence' will do nothing; men are starving and will try many things before they die. But poor I, *ach Gott!* I am no Hengist or Alaric; only a writer of Articles in bad prose; stick to thy last, O Tutor; the Pen is not worthless, it is omnipotent to those who have Faith.

Henri Beyle (Stendhal), the great, I am often tempted to think the greatest of French novelists, writes her a charming letter about *nuances*. 'It seems to me,' he says, 'that except when they read Shakespeare, Byron, or Sterne, no Englishman understands "*nuances*"; we adore them. A fool says to a woman, "I love you"; the words mean nothing, he might as well say "Olli Batachor"; it is the *nuance* which gives force to the meaning.' In 1839 Mrs. Austin writes to Victor Cousin: 'I have seen young Gladstone, a distinguished Tory who wants to re-establish education based on the Church in quite a Catholic form'; and we find her corresponding with Mr. Gladstone on the subject of education. 'If you are strong enough to provide motives and checks,' she says to him, 'you must do

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two blessed acts—reform your clergy and teach your people. As it is, how few of them conceive what it is to teach a people! Mr. Gladstone replies at great length, and in many letters, from which we may quote this passage:

You are for pressing and urging the people to their profit against their inclination: so am I. You set little value upon all merely technical instruction, upon all that fails to touch the inner nature of man: so do I. And here I find ground of union broad and deep-laid. . . .

I more than doubt whether your idea, namely that of raising man to social sufficiency and morality, can be accomplished, except through the ancient religion of Christ; . . . or whether, the principles of eclecticism are legitimately applicable to the Gospel; or whether, if we find ourselves in a state of incapacity to work through the Church, we can remedy the defect by the adoption of principles contrary to hers. . . .

But indeed I am most unfit to pursue the subject; private circumstances of no common interest are upon me, as I have become very recently engaged to Miss Glynne, and I hope your recollections will enable you in some degree to excuse me.

Lord Jeffrey has a very curious and suggestive letter on popular education, in which he denies, or at least doubts, the effect of this education on morals. He, however, supports it on the ground 'that it will increase the enjoyment of individuals,' which is certainly a very sensible claim. Humboldt writes to her about an old Indian language which was preserved by a parrot, the tribe who spoke it having been exterminated, and about 'young Darwin,' who had just published his first book. Here are some extracts from her own letters:

I heard from Lord Lansdowne two or three days ago. . . . I think he is *ce que nous avons de mieux*. He wants only the energy that great ambition gives. He says, 'We shall have a parliament of railway kings' . . . what can be worse than that? —The deification of money by a whole people. As Lord

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Brougham says, we have no right to give ourselves pharisaical airs. I must give you a story sent to me. Mrs. Hudson, the railway queen, was shown a bust of Marcus Aurelius at Lord Westminster's, on which she said, 'I suppose that is not the present Marquis.' To *quêter* this, you must know that the extreme vulgar (hackney coachmen, etc.) in England pronounce 'marquis' very like 'Marcus.'

Dec. 17th.—Went to Savigny's. Nobody was there but W. Grimm and his wife and a few men. Grimm told me he had received two volumes of Norwegian fairy-tales, and that they were delightful. Talking of them, I said, 'Your children appear to be the happiest in the world: they live in the midst of fairy-tales.' 'Ah,' said he, 'I must tell you about that. When we were at Göttingen, somebody spoke to my little son about his father's *Mährchen*. He had read them, but never thought of their being mine. He came running to me, and said with an offended air, "Father, they say you wrote those fairy-tales; surely you never invented such silly rubbish?" He thought it below my dignity.'

Savigny told a *Völkemährchen* too:

'St. Anselm was grown old and infirm, and lay on the ground long thorns and thistles. *Der liebe Gott* said to him, "You are very badly lodged there; why don't you build yourself a house?" "Before I take the trouble," said Anselm, "I should like to know how long I have to live." "About thirty years," said *Der liebe Gott*. "Oh, for so short a time," replied he, "it's not worth while," and turned himself round among the thistles.'

Dr. Franck told me a story of which I had never heard before. Voltaire had for some reason or other taken a grudge against the prophet Habakkuk, and affected to find in him things he never wrote. Somebody took the Bible and began to demonstrate to him that he was mistaken. '*C'est égal*,' he said, impatiently, '*Habakkuk était capable de tout!*'

Oct. 30, 1853.

I am not in love with the *Richtung* (tendency) of our modern novelists. There is abundance of talent; but writing a pretty, graceful, touching, yet pleasing story is the last thing our writers nowadays think of. Their novels are party pamphlets

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on political or social questions, like *Sybil*, or *Alton Locke*, or *Mary Barton*, or *Uncle Tom*; or they are the most minute and painful dissections of the least agreeable and beautiful parts of our nature, like those of Miss Brontë—*Jane Eyre* and *Villette*; or they are a kind of martyrology, like Mrs. Marsh's *Emilia Wyndham*, which makes you almost doubt whether any torments the heroine would have earned by being naughty could exceed those she incurred by her virtue.

Where, oh! where is the charming, humane, gentle spirit that dictated the *Vicar of Wakefield*—the spirit which Goethe so justly calls *versöhnend* (reconciling), with all the weaknesses and woes of humanity? . . . Have you read Thackeray's *Esmond*? It is a curious and very successful attempt to imitate the style of our old novelists. . . . Which of Mrs. Gore's novels are translated? They are very clever, lively, worldly, bitter, disagreeable, and entertaining. . . . Miss Austen's—are they translated? They are not new, and are Dutch paintings of every-day people—very clever, very true, very *unæsthetic*, but amusing. I have not seen *Ruth*, by Mrs. Gaskell. I hear it much admired—and blamed. It is one of the many proofs of the desire women now have to *friser* questionable topics, and to *poser* insoluble moral problems. George Sand has turned their heads in that direction. I think a few *broad* scenes or hearty jokes *à la* Fielding were very harmless in comparison. They *confounded* nothing. . . .

The *Heir of Redcliffe* I have not read. . . . I am not worthy of superhuman flights of virtue—in a novel. I want to see how people act and suffer who are as good-for-nothing as I am myself. Then I have the sinful pretension to be amused, whereas all our novelists want to reform us, and to show us what a hideous place this world is: *Ma foi, je ne le sais que trop*, without their help.

The *Head of the Family* has some merits. . . . But there is too much affliction and misery and frenzy. The heroine is one of those creatures now so common (in novels), who remind me of a poor bird tied to a stake (as was once the cruel sport of boys) to be 'shyed' at (i.e. pelted) till it died; only our gentle lady-writers at the end of all untie the poor battered bird, and assure us that it is never the worse for all the blows it has had—nay, the better—and that now, with its broken wings and torn feathers and bruised body, it is going to be quite happy.

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No, fair ladies, you know that it is not so—*resigned*, if you please, but make me no shams of happiness out of such wrecks.

In politics Mrs. Austin was a philosophical Tory. Radicalism she detested, and she and most of her friends seem to have regarded it as moribund. 'The Radical party is evidently effete,' she writes to M. Victor Cousin; the probable 'leader of the Tory party' is Mr. Gladstone. 'The people must be instructed, must be guided, must be, in short, governed,' she writes elsewhere; and in a letter to Dr. Whewell, she says that the state of things in France fills 'me with the deepest anxiety on one point,—the point on which the permanency of our institutions and our salvation as a nation turn. Are our higher classes able to keep the lead of the rest? If they are, we are safe; if not, I agree with my poor dear Charles Buller—*our* turn must come. Now Cambridge and Oxford must really look to this.' The belief in the power of the Universities to stem the current of democracy is charming. She grew to regard Carlyle as 'one of the dissolvents of the age—as mischievous as his extravagances will let him be'; speaks of Kingsley and Maurice as 'pernicious'; and talks of John Stuart Mill as a 'demagogue.' She was no *doctrinaire*. 'One ounce of education demanded is worth a pound imposed. It is no use to give the meat before you give the hunger.' She was delighted at a letter of St. Hilaire's, in which he said, 'We have a system and no results; you have results and no system.' Yet she had a deep sympathy with the wants of the people. She was horrified at something Babbage told her of the population of some of the manufacturing towns who are *worked out* before they attain to thirty years of age. 'But I am persuaded that the remedy will not, cannot come

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from the people,' she adds. Many of her letters are concerned with the question of the higher education of women. She discusses Buckle's lecture on 'The Influence of Women upon the Progress of Knowledge,' admits to M. Guizot that women's intellectual life is largely coloured by the emotions, but adds: 'One is not precisely a fool because one's opinions are greatly influenced by one's affections. The opinions of men are often influenced by worse things.' Dr. Whewell consults her about lecturing women on Plato, being slightly afraid lest people should think it ridiculous; Comte writes her elaborate letters on the relation of women to progress; and Mr. Gladstone promises that Mrs. Gladstone will carry out at Hawarden the suggestions contained in one of her pamphlets. She was always very practical, and never lost her admiration for plain sewing.

All through the book we come across interesting and amusing things. She gets St. Hilaire to order a large, sensible bonnet for her in Paris, which was at once christened the 'Aristotelian,' and was supposed to be the only useful bonnet in England. Grote has to leave Paris after the *coup d'état*, he tells her, because he cannot bear to see the establishment of a Greek tyrant. Alfred de Vigny, Macaulay, John Stirling, Southey, Alexis de Tocqueville, Hallam, and Jean Jacques Ampère all contribute to these pleasant pages. She seems to have inspired the warmest feelings of friendship in those who knew her. Guizot writes to her: 'Madame de Staël used to say that the best thing in the world was a serious Frenchman. I turn the compliment, and say that the best thing in the world is an affectionate Englishman. How much

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more an Englishwoman! Given equal qualities, a woman is always more charming than a man.'

Lucie Austin, afterwards Lady Duff Gordon, was born in 1821. Her chief playfellow was John Stuart Mill, and Jeremy Bentham's garden was her playground. She was a lovely, romantic child, who was always wanting the flowers to talk to her, and used to invent the most wonderful stories about animals, of whom she was passionately fond. In 1834 Mrs. Austin decided on leaving England, and Sydney Smith wrote his immortal letter to the little girl:

Lucie, Lucie, my dear child, don't tear your frock: tearing frocks is not of itself a proof of genius. But write as your mother writes, act as your mother acts: be frank, loyal, affectionate, simple, honest, and then integrity or laceration of frock is of little import. And Lucie, dear child, mind your arithmetic. You know in the first sum of yours I ever saw there was a mistake. You had carried two (as a cab is licensed to do), and you ought, dear Lucie, to have carried but one. Is this a trifle? What would life be without arithmetic but a scene of horrors? You are going to Boulogne, the city of debts, peopled by men who have never understood arithmetic. By the time you return, I shall probably have received my first paralytic stroke, and shall have lost all recollection of you. Therefore I now give you my parting advice—don't marry any!; who has not a tolerable understanding and a thousand a year. And God bless you, dear child.

At Boulogne she sat next Heine at *table d'hôte*. 'He heard me speak German to my mother, and soon began to talk to me, and then said, "When you go back to England, you can tell your friends that you have seen Heinrich Heine." I replied, "And who is Heinrich Heine?" He laughed heartily and took no offence at my ignorance; and

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we used to lounge on the end of the pier together, where he told me stories in which fish, mermaids, water-sprites and a very funny old French fiddler with a poodle were mixed up in the most fanciful manner, sometimes humorous, and very often pathetic, especially when the water-sprites brought him greetings from the "Nord See." He was... so kind to me and so sarcastic to every one else.' Twenty years afterwards the little girl whose 'braune Augen' Heine had celebrated in his charming poem *Wenn ich an deinem Hause*, used to go and see the dying poet in Paris. 'It does one good,' he said to her, 'to see a woman who does not carry about a broken heart, to be mended by all sorts of men, like the women here, who do not see that a total want of heart is their real failing.' On another occasion he said to her: 'I have now made peace with the whole world, and at last also with God, who sends thee to me as a beautiful angel of death: I shall certainly soon die.' Lady Duff Gordon said to him: 'Poor Poet, do you still retain such splendid illusions, that you transform a travelling Englishwoman into Azrael? That used not to be the case, for you always disliked us.' He answered: 'Yes, I do not know what possessed me to dislike the English, ... it really was only petulance; I never hated them, indeed, I never knew them. I was only once in England, but knew no one, and found London very dreary, and the people and the streets odious. But England has revenged herself well; she has sent me most excellent friends—thysself and Milnes, that good Milnes.'

There are delightful letters from Dicky Doyle here, with the most amusing drawings, one of the present Sir Robert Peel as he made his maiden

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speech in the House being excellent; and the various descriptions of Hassan's performances are extremely amusing. Hassan was a black boy, who had been turned away by his master because he was going blind, and was found by Lady Duff Gordon one night sitting on her doorstep. She took care of him, and had him cured, and he seems to have been a constant source of delight to every one. On one occasion, 'when Prince Louis Napoleon (the late Emperor of the French) came in unexpectedly, he gravely said: "Please, my Lady, I ran out and bought twopennyworth of sprats for the Prince, and for the honour of the house."' Here is an amusing letter from Mrs. Norton:

MY DEAR LUCIE,—We have never thanked you for the *red Pots*, which no early Christian should be without, and which add that finishing stroke to the splendour of our demesne, which was supposed to depend on a roc's egg, in less intelligent times. We have now a warm *Pompeian* appearance, and the constant contemplation of these classical objects favours the beauty of the facial line; for what can be deduced from the great fact, apparent in all the states of antiquity, that *straight noses* were the ancient custom, but the logical assumption that the constant habit of turning up the nose at unsightly objects—such as the National Gallery and other offensive and obtrusive things—has produced the modern divergence from the true and proper line of profile? I rejoice to think that we ourselves are exempt. I attribute this to our love of Pompeian Pots (on account of the beauty and distinction of this Pot's shape I spell it with a big P), which has kept us straight in a world of crookedness. The pursuit of profiles under difficulties—how much more rare than a pursuit of knowledge! Talk of setting good examples before our children! Bah! let us set good Pompeian Pots before our children, and when they grow up they will not depart from them.

Lady Duff Gordon's *Letters from the Cape*, and

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her brilliant translation of *The Amber Witch*, are, of course, well known. The latter book was, with Lady Wilde's translation of *Sidonia the Sorceress*, my favourite romantic reading when a boy. Her letters from Egypt are wonderfully vivid and picturesque. Here is an interesting bit of art criticism:

Sheykh Yoosuf laughed so heartily over a print in an illustrated paper from a picture of Hilton's of Rebekah at the well, with the old 'wekeel' of 'Sidi Ibraheem' (Abraham's chief servant) *kneeling* before the girl he was sent to fetch, like an old fool without his turban, and Rebekah and the other girls in queer fancy dresses, and the camels with snouts like pigs. 'If the painter could not go into "Es Sham" to see how the Arab really look,' said Sheykh Yoosuf, 'why did he not paint a well in England, with girls like English peasants—at least it would have looked natural to English people? or the wekeel would not seem so like a madman if he had taken off a hat!' I cordially agree with Yoosuf's art criticism. *Fancy* pictures of Eastern things are hopelessly absurd.

Mrs. Ross has certainly produced a most fascinating volume, and her book is one of the books of the season. It is edited with tact and judgment.

Caroline, by Lady Lindsay, is certainly Lady Lindsay's best work. It is written in a very clever modern style, and is as full of *esprit* and wit as it is of subtle psychological insight. *Caroline* is an heiress, who, coming downstairs at a Continental hotel, falls into the arms of a charming, penniless young man. The hero of the novel is the young man's friend, Lord Lexamont, who makes the 'great renunciation,' and succeeds in being fine without being priggish, and Quixotic without being ridiculous. Miss Ffoulkes, the elderly spinster, is a capital character, and, indeed, the whole book

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is cleverly written. It has also the advantage of being in only one volume. The influence of Mudie on literature, the baneful influence of the circulating library, is clearly on the wane. The gain to literature is incalculable. English novels were becoming very tedious with their three volumes of padding—at least, the second volume was always padding—and extremely indigestible. A reckless punster once remarked to me, *apropos* of English novels, that ‘the proof of the padding is in the eating,’ and certainly English fiction has been very heavy—heavy with the best intentions. Lady Lindsay’s book is a sign that better things are in store for us. She is brief and bright.

What are the best books to give as Christmas presents to good girls who are always pretty, or to pretty girls who are occasionally good? People are so fond of giving away what they do not want themselves, that charity is largely on the increase. But with this kind of charity I have not much sympathy. If one gives away a book, it should be a charming book—so charming, that one regrets having given it, and would not take it back. Looking over the Christmas books sent to me by various publishers, I find that these are the best and the most pleasing: *Gleanings from the ‘Graphic,’* by Randolph Caldecott, a most fascinating volume full of sketches that have real wit and humour of line, and are not simply dependent on what the French call the *légende*, the literary explanation; *Meg’s Friend*, by Alice Corkran, one of our most delicate and graceful prose-writers in the sphere of fiction, and one whose work has the rare artistic qualities of refinement and simplicity; *Under False Colours*, by Sarah Doudney,

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an excellent story; *The Fisherman's Daughter*, by Florence Montgomery, the author of *Misunderstood*, a tale with real charm of idea and treatment; *Under a Cloud*, by the author of *The Atelier du Lys*, and quite worthy of its author; *The Third Miss St. Quentin*, by Mrs. Molesworth, and *A Christmas Posy* from the same fascinating pen, and with delightful illustrations by Walter Crane. Miss Rosa Mulholland's *Giannetta* and Miss Agnes Giberne's *Ralph Hardcastle's Will* are also admirable books for presents, and the bound volume of *Atalanta* has much that is delightful both in art and in literature.

The prettiest, indeed the most beautiful, book from an artistic point of view is undoubtedly Mr. Walter Crane's *Flora's Feast*. It is an imaginative Masque of Flowers, and as lovely in colour as it is exquisite in design. It shows us the whole pomp and pageant of the year, the Snowdrops like white-crested knights, the little naked Crocus kneeling to catch the sunlight in his golden chalice, the Daffodils blowing their trumpets like young hunters, the Anemones with their wind-blown raiment, the green-kirtled Marsh-marigolds, and the 'Lady-smocks all silver-white,' tripping over the meadows like Arcadian milk-maids. Buttercups are here, and the white-plumed Thorn in spiky armour, and the Crown-imperial borne in stately procession, and red-bannered Tulips, and Hyacinths with their spring bells, and Chaucer's Daisy—

sir all and sweet,
Si douce est la Marguerite.

Gorgeous Peonies, and Columbines 'that drew the car of Venus,' and the Rose with her lover, and the stately white-vestured Lilies, and wide staring Ox-

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eyes, and scarlet Poppies pass before us. There are Primroses and Corncockles, Chrysanthemums in robes of rich brocade, Sunflowers and tall Hollyhocks, and pale Christmas Roses. The designs for the Daffodils, the wild Roses, the Convolvulus, and the Hollyhock are admirable, and would be beautiful in embroidery or in any precious material. Indeed, any one who wishes to find beautiful designs cannot do better than get the book. It is, in its way, a little masterpiece, and its grace and fancy, and beauty of line and colour, cannot be over-estimated. The Greeks gave human form to wood and stream, and saw Nature best in Naiad or in Dryad. Mr. Crane, with something of Gothic fantasy, has caught the Greek feeling, the love of personification, the passion for representing things under the conditions of the human form. The flowers are to him so many knights and ladies, page-boys or shepherd-boys, divine nymphs or simple girls, and in their fair bodies or fanciful raiment one can see the flower's very form and absolute essence, so that one loves their artistic truth no less than their artistic beauty. This book contains some of the best work Mr. Crane has ever done. His art is never so successful as when it is entirely remote from life. The slightest touch of actuality seems to kill it. It lives, or should live, in a world of its own fashioning. It is decorative in its complete subordination of fact to beauty of effect, in the grandeur of its curves and lines, in its entirely imaginative treatment. Almost every page of this book gives a suggestion for some rich tapestry, some fine screen, some painted *cassone*, some carving in wood or ivory.

From Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner I have

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received a large collection of Christmas cards and illustrated books. One of the latter, an *édition de luxe* of Sheridan's *Here's to the Maiden of Bushful Fifteen*, is very cleverly illustrated by Miss Alice Havers and Mr. Ernest Wilson. It seems to me, however, that there is a danger of modern illustration becoming too pictorial. What we need is good book-ornament, decorative ornament that will go with type and printing, and give to each page a harmony and unity of effect. Merely dotting a page with reproductions of water-colour drawings will not do. It is true that Japanese art, which is essentially decorative, is pictorial also. But the Japanese have the most wonderful delicacy of touch, and with a science so subtle that it gives the effect of exquisite accident, they can by mere placing make an undecorated space decorative. There is also an intimate connection between their art and their handwriting or printed characters. They both go together, and show the same feeling for form and line. Our aim should be to discover some mode of illustration that will harmonise with the shapes of our letters. At present there is a discord between our pictorial illustrations and our unpictorial type. The former are too essentially imitative in character, and often disturb a page instead of decorating it. However, I suppose we must regard most of these Christmas books merely as books of pictures, with a running accompaniment of explanatory text. As the text, as a rule, consists of poetry, this is putting the poet in a very subordinate position; but the poetry in the books of this kind is not, as a rule, of a very high order of excellence.

(1) *Three Generations of English Women. Memoirs and Correspondence of Susannah Taylor, Sarah Austin, and Lady Duff Gordon*

POETRY AND PRISON

By Janet Ross, Author of *Italian Sketches, Land of Manfred, etc.* (Fisher Unwin.)

(2) *Caroline.* By Lady Lindsay. (Bentley and Son.)

(3) *Gleanings from the 'Graphic.'* By Randolph Caldecott. (Routledge and Sons.)

(4) *Meg's Friend.* By Alice Corkran. (Blackie and Sons.)

(5) *Under False Colours.* By Sarah Doudney. (Blackie and Sons.)

(6) *The Fisherman's Daughter.* By Florence Montgomery. (Hatchards.)

(7) *Under a Cloud.* By the Author of *The Atelier du Lys.* (Hatchards.)

(8) *The Third Miss St. Quentin.* By Mrs. Molesworth. (Hatchards.)

(9) *A Christmas Poxy.* By Mrs. Molesworth. Illustrated by Walter Crane. (Hatchards.)

(10) *Giannetta. A Girl's Story of Herself.* By Rosa Mulholland. (Blackie and Sons.)

(11) *Ralph Hardcastle's Will.* By Agnes Giberne. (Hatchards.)

(12) *Flora's Feast. A Masque of Flowers.* Penned and Pictured by Walter Crane. (Cassell and Co.)

(13) *Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen.* By Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Illustrated by Alice Havers and Ernest Wilson (Hildesheimer and Faulkner.)

POETRY AND PRISON

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 3, 1889.)

PRISON has had an admirable effect on Mr. Wilfrid Blunt as a poet. The *Love Sonnets of Proteus*, in spite of their clever Musset-like modernities and their swift brilliant wit, were but affected or fantastic at best. They were simply the records of passing moods and moments, of which some were sad and others sweet, and not a few shameful. Their subject was not of high or serious import. They contained much that was wilful and weak. *In Vinculis*, upon the other hand, is a book that stirs one by its fine sincerity of purpose, its lofty and impassioned thought, its depth and ardour of intense feeling. 'Imprisonment,' says Mr. Blunt

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in his preface, 'is a reality of discipline most useful to the modern soul, lapped as it is in physical sloth and self-indulgence. Like a sickness or a spiritual retreat it purifies and ennobles; and the soul emerges from it stronger and more self-contained.' To him, certainly, it has been a mode of purification. The opening sonnets, composed in the bleak cell of Galway Gaol, and written down on the fly-leaves of the prisoner's prayer-book, are full of things nobly conceived and nobly uttered, and show that though Mr. Balfour may enforce 'plain living' by his prison regulations, he cannot prevent 'high thinking' or in any way limit or constrain the freedom of a man's soul. They are, of course, intensely personal in expression. They could not fail to be so. But the personality that they reveal has nothing petty or ignoble about it. The petulant cry of the shallow egoist which was the chief characteristic of the *Love Sonnets of Proteus* is not to be found here. In its place we have wild grief and terrible scorn, fierce rage and flame-like passion. Such a sonnet as the following comes out of the very fire of heart and brain:

God knows, 'twas not with a fore-reasoned plan
I left the easeful dwellings of my peace,
And sought this combat with ungodly Man,
And ceaseless still through years that do not cease
Have warred with Powers and Principalities.
My natural soul, ere yet these strifes began,
Was as a sister diligent to please
And loving all, and most the human clan.

God knows it. And He knows how the world's tears
Touched me. And He is witness of my wrath,
How it was kindled against murderers
Who slew for gold, and how upon their path
I met them. Since which day the World in arms
Strikes at my life with angers and alarms.

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And this sonnet has all the strange strength of that despair which is but the prelude to a larger hope:

I thought to do a deed of chivalry,
An act of worth, which haply in her sight
Who was my mistress should recorded be
And of the nations. And, when thus the fight
Faltered and men once bold with faces white
Turned this and that way in excuse to flee,
I only stood, and by the foeman's might
Was overborne and mangled cruelly.

Then crawled I to her feet, in whose dear cause
I made this venture, and 'Behold,' I said,
'How I am wounded for thee in these wars.'
But she, 'Poor cripple, would'st thou I should wed
A limbless trunk?' and laughing turned from me.
Yet she was fair, and her name 'Liberty.'

The sonnet beginning

A prison is a convent without God—
Poverty, Chastity, Obedience
Its precepts are:

is very fine; and this, written just after entering the gaol, is powerful:

Naked I came into the world of pleasure,
And naked come I to this house of pain.
Here at the gate I lay down my life's treasure,
My pride, my garments and my name with men.
The world and I henceforth shall be as twain,
No sound of me shall pierce for good or ill
These walls of grief. Nor shall I hear the vain
Laughter and tears of those who love me still.

Within, what new life waits me! Little ease,
Cold lying, hunger, nights of wakefulness,
Harsh orders given, no voice to soothe or please,
Poor thieves for friends, for books rules meaningless
This is the grave—nay, hell. Yet, Lord of Might,
Still in Thy light my spirit shall see light.

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But, indeed, all the sonnets are worth reading, and *The Canon of Aughrim*, the longest poem in the book, is a most masterly and dramatic description of the tragic life of the Irish peasant. Literature is not much indebted to Mr. Balfour for his sophistical *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* which is one of the dullest books we know, but it must be admitted that by sending Mr. Blunt to gaol he has converted a clever rhymers into an earnest and deep-thinking poet. 'The narrow confines of the prison cell seem to suit the 'sonnet's scanty plot of ground,' and an unjust imprisonment for a noble cause strengthens as well as deepens the nature.

In Vinculis. By Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Author of *The Wind and the Whirlwind*, *The Love Sonnets of Proteus*, etc. etc. (Kegan Paul.)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO WALT WHITMAN

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 25, 1889.)

'NO one will get at my verses who insists upon viewing them as a literary performance . . . or as aiming mainly toward art and æstheticism.' '*Leaves of Grass* . . . has mainly been the outcropping of my own emotional and other personal nature—an attempt, from first to last, to put a *Person*, a human being (myself, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century in America,) freely, fully and truly on record. I could not find any similar personal record in current literature that satisfied me.' In these words Walt Whitman gives us the true attitude we should adopt towards his work, having, indeed, a much saner view of the value and meaning of that work than either his eloquent admirers or noisy detractors can boast of possessing.

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His last book, *November Braggs*, as he calls it, published in the winter of the old man's life, reveals to us, not indeed a soul's tragedy, for its last note is one of joy and hope, and noble and unshaken faith in all that is fine and worthy of such faith, but certainly the drama of a human soul, and puts on record with a simplicity that has in it both sweetness and strength the record of his spiritual development, and of the aim and motive both of the manner and the matter of his work. His strange mode of expression is shown in these pages to have been the result of deliberate and self-conscious choice. The 'barbaric yawp' which he sent over 'the roofs of the world' so many years ago, and which wrung from Mr. Swinburne's lip such lofty panegyric in song and such loud clamorous censure in prose, appears here in what will be to many an entirely new light. For in his very rejection of art Walt Whitman is an artist. He tried to produce a certain effect by certain means and he succeeded. There is much method in what many have termed his madness, too much method, indeed, some may be tempted to fancy.

In the story of his life, as he tells it to us, we find him at the age of sixteen beginning a definite and philosophical study of literature:

Summers and falls, I used to go off, sometimes for a week at a stretch, down in the country, or to Long Island's seashores—there, in the presence of outdoor influences, I went over thoroughly the Old and New Testaments, and absorb'd (probably to better advantage for me than in any library or indoor room—it makes such difference *where* you read) Shakspeare, Ossian, the best translated versions I could get of Homer, Eschylus, Sophocles, the old German Nibelungen, the ancient Hindoo poems, and one or two other masterpieces, Dante's among them. As it happen'd, I read the latter mostly in an old wood. The *Iliad* . . . I read first thoroughly on the

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peninsula of Orient, northeast end of Long Island, in a shelter'd hollow of rock and sand, with the sea on each side. (I have wonder'd since why I was not overwhelm'd by those mighty masters. Likely because I read them, as described, in the full presence of Nature, under the sun, with the far-spreading landscape and vistas, or the sea rolling in.)

Edgar Allan Poe's amusing bit of dogmatism that, for our occasions and our day, 'there can be no such thing as a long poem,' fascinated him. 'The same thought had been haunting my mind before,' he said, 'but Poe's argument . . . work'd the sum out, and proved it to me,' and the English translation of the Bible seems to have suggested to him the possibility of a poetic form which, while retaining the spirit of poetry, would still be free from the trammels of rhyme and of a definite metrical system. Having thus, to a certain degree, settled upon what one might call the 'technique' of Whitmanism, he began to brood upon the nature of that spirit which was to give life to the strange form. The central point of the poetry of the future seemed to him to be necessarily 'an identical body and soul, a personality,' in fact, which personality, he tells us frankly, 'after many considerations and ponderings I deliberately settled should be myself.' However, for the true creation and revealing of this personality, at first only dimly felt, a new stimulus was needed. This came from the Civil War. After describing the many dreams and passions of his boyhood and early manhood, he goes on to say:

These, however, and much more might have gone on and come to naught (almost positively would have come to naught.) if a sudden, vast, terrible, direct and indirect stimulus for new and national declamatory expression had not been given to me. It is certain, I say, that although I had made a start before, only from the occurrence of the Secession War, and what it

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show'd me as by flashes of lightning, with the emotional depths it sounded and arous'd (of course, I don't mean in my own heart only, I saw it just as plainly in others, in millions)—that only from the strong flare and provocation of that war's sights and scenes the final reasons-for-being of an autochthonic and passionate song definitely came forth.

I went down to the war fields of Virginia . . . lived thenceforward in camp—saw great battles and the days and nights afterward—partook of all the fluctuations, gloom, despair, hopes again arous'd, courage evoked—death readily risk'd—the cause, too—along and filling those agonistic and lurid following years . . . the real parturition years . . . of this henceforth homogeneous Union. Without those three or four years and the experiences they gave, *Leaves of Grass* would not now be existing.

Having thus obtained the necessary stimulus for the quickening and awakening of the personal self, some day to be endowed with universality, he sought to find new notes of song, and, passing beyond the mere passion for expression, he aimed at 'Suggestiveness' first.

I round and finish little, if anything; and could not, consistently with my scheme. The reader will have his or her part to do, just as much as I have had mine. I seek less to state or display any theme or thought, and more to bring you, reader, into the atmosphere of the theme or thought—there to pursue your own flight.

Another 'impetus-word' is Comradeship, and other 'word-signs' are Good Cheer, Content and Hope. Individuality, especially, he sought for:

I have allow'd the stress of my poems from beginning to end to bear upon American individuality and assist it—not only because that is a great lesson in Nature, amid all her generalising laws, but as counterpoise to the leveling tendencies of Democracy—and for other reasons. Defiant of ostensible literary and other conventions, I avowedly chant 'the great pride of man in himself,' and permit it to be more or less a *motif* of nearly all my verse. I think this pride indispensable

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to an American. I think it not inconsistent with obedience, humility, deference, and self-questioning.

A new theme also was to be found in the relation of the sexes, conceived in a natural, simple and healthy form, and he protests against poor Mr. William Rossetti's attempt to Bowdlerise and expurgate his song.

From another point of view *Leaves of Grass* is avowedly the song of Sex and Amativeness, and even Animality—though meanings that do not usually go along with these words are behind all, and will duly emerge; and all are sought to be lifted into a different light and atmosphere. Of this feature, intentionally palpable in a few lines, I shall only say the espousing principle of those lines so gives breath to my whole scheme that the bulk of the pieces might as well have been left unwritten were those lines omitted. . . .

Universal as are certain facts and symptoms of communities . . . there is nothing so rare in modern conventions and poetry as their normal recognizance. Literature is always calling in the doctor for consultation and confession, and always giving evasions and swathing suppressions in place of that 'heroic nudity' on which only a genuine diagnosis . . . can be built. And in respect to editions of *Leaves of Grass* in time to come (if there should be such) I take occasion now to confirm those lines with the settled convictions and deliberate renewals of thirty years, and to hereby prohibit, as far as word of mine can do so, any elision of them.

But beyond all these notes and moods and motives is the lofty spirit of a grand and free acceptance of all things that are worthy of existence. He desired, he says, 'to formulate a poem whose every thought or fact should directly or indirectly be or connive at an implicit belief in the wisdom, health, mystery, beauty of every process, every concrete object, every human or other existence, not only consider'd from the point of view of all, but of each.' His two final utterances are that 'really great poetry is always . . . the result of a national spirit, and not the privilege

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of a polish'd and select few'; and that 'the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung.'

Such are the views contained in the opening essay *A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads*, as he calls it; but there are many other essays in this fascinating volume, some on poets such as Burns and Lord Tennyson, for whom Walt Whitman has a profound admiration; some on old actors and singers, the elder Booth, Forrest, Alboni and Mario being his special favourites; others on the native Indians, on the Spanish element in American nationality, on Western slang, on the poetry of the Bible, and on Abraham Lincoln. But Walt Whitman is at his best when he is analysing his own work and making schemes for the poetry of the future. Literature, to him, has a distinctly social aim. He seeks to build up the masses by 'building up grand individuals.' And yet literature itself must be preceded by noble forms of life. 'The best literature is always the result of something far greater than itself—not the hero but the portrait of the hero. Before there can be recorded history or poem there must be the transaction.' Certainly, in Walt Whitman's views there is a largeness of vision, a healthy sanity and a fine ethical purpose. He is not to be placed with the professional littérateurs of his country, Boston novelists, New York poets and the like. He stands apart, and the chief value of his work is in its prophecy, not in its performance. He has begun a prelude to larger themes. He is the herald to a new era. As a man he is the precursor of a fresh type. He is a factor in the heroic and spiritual evolution of the human being. If Poetry has passed him by, Philosophy will take note of him.

November Boughs. By Walt Whitman. (Alexander Gardner.)

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THE NEW PRESIDENT

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 26, 1889.)

IN a little book that he calls *The Enchanted Island* Mr. Wyke Bayliss, the new President of the Royal Society of British Artists, has given his gospel of art to the world. His predecessor in office had also a gospel of art but it usually took the form of an autobiography. Mr. Whistler always spelt art, and we believe still spells it, with a capital 'I.' However, he was never dull. His brilliant wit, his caustic satire, and his amusing epigrams, or, perhaps, we should say epitaphs, on his contemporaries, made his views on art as delightful as they were misleading and as fascinating as they were unsound. Besides, he introduced American humour into art criticism, and for this, if for no other reason, he deserves to be affectionately remembered. Mr. Wyke Bayliss, upon the other hand, is rather tedious. The last President never said much that was true, but the present President never says anything that is new; and, if art be a fairy-haunted wood or an enchanted island, we must say that we prefer the old Puck to the fresh Prospero. Water is an admirable thing—at least, the Greeks said it was—and Mr. Ruskin is an admirable writer; but a combination of both is a little depressing.

Still, it is only right to add that Mr. Wyke Bayliss, at his best, writes very good English. Mr. Whistler, for some reason or other, always adopted the phraseology of the minor prophets. Possibly it was in order to emphasise his well-known claims to verbal inspiration, or perhaps he thought with Voltaire that *Habakkuk était capable de tout*, and

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wished to shelter himself under the shield of a definitely irresponsible writer none of whose prophecies, according to the French philosopher, has ever been fulfilled. The idea was clever enough at the beginning, but ultimately the manner became monotonous. The spirit of the Hebrews is excellent but their mode of writing is not to be imitated, and no amount of American jokes will give it that modernity which is essential to a good literary style. Admirable as are Mr. Whistler's fireworks on canvas, his fireworks in prose are abrupt, violent and exaggerated. However, oracles, since the days of the Pythia, have never been remarkable for style, and the modest Mr. Wyke Bayliss is as much Mr. Whistler's superior as a writer as he is his inferior as a painter and an artist. Indeed, some of the passages in this book are so charmingly written and with such felicity of phrase that we cannot help feeling that the President of the British Artists, like a still more famous President of our day, can express himself far better through the medium of literature than he can through the medium of line and colour. This, however, applies only to Mr. Wyke Bayliss's prose. His poetry is very bad, and the sonnets at the end of the book are almost as mediocre as the drawings that accompany them. As we read them we cannot but regret that, in this point at any rate, Mr. Bayliss has not imitated the wise example of his predecessor who, with all his faults, was never guilty of writing a line of poetry, and is, indeed, quite incapable of doing anything of the kind.

As for the matter of Mr. Bayliss's discourses, his views on art must be admitted to be very commonplace and old-fashioned. What is the use of telling artists that they should try and paint Nature as she

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really is? What Nature really is, is a question for metaphysics not for art. Art deals with appearances, and the eye of the man who looks at Nature, the vision, in fact, of the artist, is far more important to us than what he looks at. There is more truth in Corot's aphorism that a landscape is simply 'the mood of a man's mind' than there is in all Mr. Bayliss's laborious disquisitions on naturalism. Again, why does Mr. Bayliss waste a whole chapter in pointing out real or supposed resemblances between a book of his published twelve years ago and an article by Mr. Palgrave which appeared recently in the *Nineteenth Century*? Neither the book nor the article contains anything of real interest, and as for the hundred or more parallel passages which Mr. Wyke Bayliss solemnly prints side by side, most of them are like parallel lines and never meet. The only original proposal that Mr. Bayliss has to offer us is that the House of Commons should, every year, select some important event from national and contemporary history and hand it over to the artists who are to choose from among themselves a man to make a picture of it. In this way Mr. Bayliss believes that we could have the historic art, and suggests as examples of what he means a picture of Florence Nightingale in the hospital at Scutari, a picture of the opening of the first London Board-school, and a picture of the Senate House at Cambridge with the girl graduate receiving a degree 'that shall acknowledge her to be as wise as Merlin himself and leave her still as beautiful as Vivien.' This proposal is, of course, very well meant, but, to say nothing of the danger of leaving historic art at the mercy of a majority in the House of Commons, who would naturally vote for its own view of

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things, Mr. Bayliss does not seem to realise that a great event is not necessarily a pictorial event. 'The decisive events of the world,' as has been well said, 'take place in the intellect,' and as for Board-schools, academic ceremonies, hospital wards and the like, they may well be left to the artists of the illustrated papers, who do them admirably and quite as well as they need be done. Indeed, the pictures of contemporary events, Royal marriages, naval reviews and things of this kind that appear in the Academy every year, are always extremely bad; while the very same subjects treated in black and white in the *Graphic* or the *London News* are excellent. Besides, if we want to understand the history of a nation through the medium of art, it is to the imaginative and ideal arts that we have to go and not to the arts that are definitely imitative. The visible aspect of life no longer contains for us the secret of life's spirit. Probably it never did contain it. And, if Mr. Barker's *Waterloo Banquet* and Mr. Frith's *Marriage of the Prince of Wales* are examples of healthy historic art, the less we have of such art the better. However, Mr. Bayliss is full of the most ardent faith and speaks quite gravely of genuine portraits of St. John, St. Peter and St. Paul dating from the first century, and of the establishment by the Israelites of a school of art in the wilderness under the now little appreciated Bezaleel. He is a pleasant, picturesque writer, but he should not speak about art. Art is a sealed book to him.

The Enchanted Island. By Wyke Bayliss, F.S.A., President of the Royal Society of British Artists. (Allen and Co.)

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SOME LITERARY NOTES

II

(*Woman's World*, February 1889.)

‘**T**HE various collectors of Irish folk-lore,’ says Mr. W. B. Yeats in his charming little book *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, ‘have, from our point of view, one great merit, and from the point of view of others, one great fault.’

They have made their work literature rather than science, and told us of the Irish peasantry rather than of the primitive religion of mankind, or whatever else the folk-lorists are on the gad after. To be considered scientists they should have tabulated all their tales in forms like grocers’ bills—item the fairy king, item the queen. Instead of this they have caught the very voice of the people, the very pulse of life, each giving what was most noticed in his day. Croker and Lover, full of the ideas of harum-scarum Irish gentility, saw everything humorised. The impulse of the Irish literature of their time came from a class that did not—mainly for political reasons—take the populace seriously, and imagined the country as a humorist’s Arcadia; its passion, its gloom, its tragedy, they knew nothing of. What they did was not wholly false; they merely magnified an irresponsible type, found oftenest among boatmen, carmen, and gentlemen’s servants, into the type of a whole nation, and created the stage Irishman. The writers of ‘Forty-eight, and the famine combined, burst their bubble. Their work had the dash as well as the shallowness of an ascendant and idle class, and in Croker is touched everywhere with beauty—a gentle Arcadian beauty. Carleton, a peasant born, has in many of his stories, . . . more especially in his ghost stories, a much more serious way with him, for all his humour. Kennedy, an old bookseller in Dublin, who seems to have had a something of genuine belief in the fairies, comes next in time. He has far less literary faculty, but is wonderfully accurate, giving often the very words the stories were told in. But the best book since

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Croker in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends*. The humour has all given way to pathos and tenderness. We have here the innermost heart of the Celt in the moments he has grown to love through years of persecution, when, cushioning himself about with dreams, and hearing fairy-songs in the twilight, he ponders on the soul and on the dead. Here is the Celt, only it is the Celt dreaming.

Into a volume of very moderate dimensions, and of extremely moderate price, Mr. Yeats has collected together the most characteristic of our Irish folklore stories, grouping them together according to subject. First come *The Trooping Fairies*. The peasants say that these are 'fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost ; but the Irish antiquarians see in them 'the gods of pagan Ireland,' who, 'when no longer worshipped and fed with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination, and now are only a few spans high.' Their chief occupations are feasting, fighting, making love, and playing the most beautiful music. 'They have only one industrious person amongst them, the *lepra-caun*—the shoemaker.' It is his duty to repair their shoes when they wear them out with dancing. Mr. Yeats tells us that 'near the village of Ballisodare is a little woman who lived amongst them seven years. When she came home she had no toes—she had danced them off.' On May Eve, every seventh year, they fight for the harvest, for the best ears of grain belong to them. An old man informed Mr. Yeats that he saw them fight once, and that they tore the thatch off a house. 'Had any one else been near they would merely have seen a great wind whirling everything into the air as it passed.' When the wind drives the leaves and straws before it, 'that is the fairies, and the peasants

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take off their hats and say "God bless them." When they are gay, they sing. Many of the most beautiful tunes of Ireland 'are only their music, caught up by eavesdroppers.' No prudent peasant would hum *The Pretty Girl Milking the Cow* near a fairy rath, 'for they are jealous, and do not like to hear their songs on clumsy mortal lips.' Blake once saw a fairy's funeral. But this, as Mr. Yeats points out, must have been an English fairy, for the Irish fairies never die; they are immortal.

Then come *The Solitary Fairies*, amongst whom we find the little *Lepracaun* mentioned above. He has grown very rich, as he possesses all the treasure-crocks buried in war-time. In the early part of this century, according to Croker, they used to show in Tipperary a little shoe forgotten by the fairy shoemaker. Then there are two rather disreputable little fairies—the *Cluricaun*, who gets intoxicated in gentlemen's cellars, and the Red Man, who plays unkind practical jokes. 'The *Fear-Gorta* (Man of Hunger) is an emaciated phantom that goes through the land in famine time, begging an alms and bringing good luck to the giver.' 'The *Water-sheerie* is 'own brother to the English Jack-o'-Lantern.' 'The *Leanhaun Shee* (fairy mistress) seeks the love of mortals. If they refuse, she must be their slave; if they consent, they are hers, and can only escape by finding another to take their place. The fairy lives on their life, and they waste away. Death is no escape from her. She is the Gaelic muse, for she gives inspiration to those she persecutes. 'The Gaelic poets die young, for she is restless, and will not let them remain long on earth.' The *Pooka* is essentially an animal spirit, and some have considered him the forefather of Shakespeare's 'Puck.' He

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lives on solitary mountains, and among old ruins 'grown monstrous with much solitude,' and 'is of the race of the nightmare.' 'He has many shapes—is now a horse, . . . now a goat, now an eagle. Like all spirits, he is only half in the world of form.' The *banshee* does not care much for our democratic levelling tendencies; she loves only old families, and despises the *parvenu* or the *nouveau riche*. When more than one banshee is present, and they wail and sing in chorus, it is for the death of some holy or great one. An omen that sometimes accompanies the banshee is ' . . . an immense black coach, mounted by a coffin, and drawn by headless horses driven by a *Dullahan*.' A *Dullahan* is the most terrible thing in the world. In 1807 two of the sentries stationed outside St. James's Park saw one climbing the railings, and died of fright. Mr. Yeats suggests that they are possibly 'descended from that Irish giant who swam across the Channel with his head in his teeth.'

Then come the stories of ghosts, of saints and priests, and of giants. The ghosts live in a state intermediate between this world and the next. They are held there by some earthly longing or affection, or some duty unfulfilled, or anger against the living; they are those who are too good for hell, and too bad for heaven. Sometimes they 'take the forms of insects, especially of butterflies.' The author of the *Parochial Survey of Ireland* 'heard a woman say to a child who was chasing a butterfly, "How do you know it is not the soul of your grandfather?"' On November eve they are abroad, and dance with the fairies.' As for the saints and priests, 'there are no martyrs in the stories.' That ancient chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis 'taunted the Archbishop of

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Cashel, because no one in Ireland had received the crown of martyrdom. "Our people may be barbarous," the prelate answered, "but they have never lifted their hands against God's saints; but now that a people have come amongst us who know how to make them (it was just after the English invasion), we shall have martyrs plentifully." "The giants were the old pagan heroes of Ireland, who grew bigger and bigger, just as the gods grew smaller and smaller. The fact is they did not wait for offerings; they took them *vi et armis*."

Some of the prettiest stories are those that cluster round *Tír-na-n-Og*. This is the Country of the Young, 'for age and death have not found it; neither tears nor loud laughter have gone near it.' 'One man has gone there and returned. The bard, Oisen, who wandered away on a white horse, moving on the surface of the foam with his fairy Niamh, lived there three hundred years, and then returned looking for his comrades. The moment his foot touched the earth his three hundred years fell on him, and he was bowed double, and his beard swept the ground. He described his sojourn in the Land of Youth to Patrick before he died.' Since then, according to Mr. Yeats, 'many have seen it in many places; some in the depths of lakes, and have heard rising therefrom a vague sound of bells; more have seen it far off on the horizon, as they peered out from the western cliffs. Not three years ago a fisherman imagined that he saw it.'

Mr. Yeats has certainly done his work very well. He has shown great critical capacity in his selection of the stories, and his little introductions are charmingly written. It is delightful to come across a collection of purely imaginative work, and Mr.

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Yeats has a very quick instinct in finding out the best and the most beautiful things in Irish folklore. I am also glad to see that he has not confined himself entirely to prose, but has included Allingham's lovely poem on *The Fairies*:

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkille he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music,
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

All lovers of fairy tales and folklore should get this little book. *The Horned Women*, *The Priest's Soul*,¹ and *Teig O'Kane*, are really marvellous in their way; and, indeed, there is hardly a single story that is not worth reading and thinking over.

¹ From Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends of Ireland*.

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The wittiest writer in France at present is a woman. That clever, that *spirituelle grande dame*, who has adopted the pseudonym of 'Gyp,' has in her own country no rival. Her wit, her delicate and delightful *esprit*, her fascinating modernity, and her light, happy touch, give her a unique position in that literary movement which has taken for its object the reproduction of contemporary life. Such books as *Autour du Mariage*, *Autour du Divorce*, and *Le Petit Bob*, are, in their way, little playful masterpieces, and the only work in England that we could compare with them is Violet Fane's *Edwin and Angelina Papers*. To the same brilliant pen which gave us these wise and witty studies of modern life we owe now a more serious, more elaborate production. *Helen Davenant* is as earnestly wrought out as it is cleverly conceived. If it has a fault, it is that it is too full of matter. Out of the same material a more economical writer would have made two novels and half a dozen psychological studies for publication in American magazines. Thackeray once met Bishop Wilberforce at dinner at Dean Stanley's, and, after listening to the eloquent prelate's extraordinary flow and fund of stories, remarked to his neighbour, 'I could not afford to spend at that rate.' Violet Fane is certainly lavishly extravagant of incident, plot, and character. But we must not quarrel with richness of subject-matter at a time when tenuity of purpose and meagreness of motive seem to be becoming the dominant notes of contemporary fiction. The side-issues of the story are so complex that it is difficult, almost impossible, to describe the plot in any adequate manner. The interest centres round a young girl, Helen Davenant by name, who contracts a private and clandestine

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marriage with one of those mysterious and fascinating foreign noblemen who are becoming so invaluable to writers of fiction, either in narrative or dramatic form. Shortly after the marriage her husband is arrested for a terrible murder committed some years before in Russia, under the evil influence of occult magic and mesmerism. The crime was done in a hypnotic state, and, as described by Violet Fane, seems much more probable than the actual hypnotic experiments recorded in scientific publications. This is the supreme advantage that fiction possesses over fact. It can make things artistically probable; can call for imaginative and realistic credence; can, by force of mere style, compel us to believe. The ordinary novelists, by keeping close to the ordinary incidents of commonplace life, seem to me to abdicate half their power. Romance, at any rate, welcomes what is wonderful; the temper of wonder is part of her own secret; she loves what is strange and curious. But besides the marvels of occultism and hypnotism, there are many other things in *Helen Davenant* that are worthy of study. Violet Fane writes an admirable style. The opening chapter of the book, with its terrible poignant tragedy, is most powerfully written, and I cannot help wondering that the clever authoress cared to abandon, even for a moment, the superb psychological opportunity that this chapter affords. The touches of nature, the vivid sketches of high life, the subtle renderings of the phases and fancies of society, are also admirably done. *Helen Davenant* is certainly clever, and shows that Violet Fane can write prose that is as good as her verse, and can look at life not merely from the point of view of the poet, but also from the standpoint of the philosopher, the

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keen observer, the fine social critic. To be a fine social critic is no small thing, and to be able to incorporate in a work of fiction the results of such careful observation is to achieve what is out of the reach of many. The difficulty under which the novelist of our day labour seems to me to be this: if they do not go into society, their books are unreadable; and if they do go into society, they have no time left for writing. However, Violet Fane has solved the problem.

The chronicles which I am about to present to the reader are not the result of any conscious effort of the imagination. They are, as the title-page indicates, records of dreams occurring at intervals during the last ten years, and transcribed, pretty nearly in the order of their occurrence, from my diary. Written down as soon as possible after awaking from the slumber during which they presented themselves, these narratives, necessarily unstudied in style, and wanting in elegance of diction, have at least the merit of fresh and vivid colour; for they were committed to paper at a moment when the effect and impress of each successive vision were strong and forceful on the mind. . . .

The most remarkable features of the experiences I am about to record are the methodical consecutiveness of their sequences, and the intelligent purpose disclosed alike in the events witnessed and in the words heard or read. . . . I know of no parallel to this phenomenon, unless in the pages of Bulwer Lytton's romance entitled *The Pilgrims of the Rhine*, in which is related the story of a German student endowed with so marvellous a faculty of dreaming, that for him the normal conditions of sleeping and waking became reversed; his true life was that which he lived in his slumbers, and his hours of wakefulness appeared to him as so many uneventful and inactive intervals of arrest, occurring in an existence of intense and vivid interest which was wholly passed in the hypnotic state. . . .

During the whole period covered by these dreams I have been busily and almost continuously engrossed with scientific and literary pursuits, demanding accurate judgment and com-

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plete self-possession and rectitude of mind. At the time when many of the most vivid and remarkable visions occurred I was following my course as a student at the Paris Faculty of Medicine, preparing for examinations, daily visiting hospital wards as dresser, and attending lectures. Later, when I had taken my degree, I was engaged in the duties of my profession and in writing for the Press on scientific subjects. Neither had I ever taken opium, haschish, or other dream-producing agent. A cup of tea or coffee represents the extent of my indulgences in this direction. I mention these details in order to guard against inferences which might otherwise be drawn as to the genesis of my faculty.

It may, perhaps, be worthy of notice that by far the larger number of the dreams set down in this volume occurred towards dawn; sometimes even, after sunrise, during a 'second sleep.' A condition of fasting, united possibly with some subtle magnetic or other atmospheric state, seems, therefore, to be that most open to impressions of the kind.

This is the account given by the late Dr. Anna Kingsford of the genesis of her remarkable volume, *Dreams and Dream-Stories*; and certainly some of the stories, especially those entitled *Steepside*, *Beyond the Sunset*, and *The Village of Seers*, are well worth reading, though not intrinsically finer, either in motive or idea, than the general run of magazine stories. No one who had the privilege of knowing Mrs. Kingsford, who was one of the brilliant women of our day, can doubt for a single moment that these tales came to her in the way she describes; but to me the result is just a little disappointing. Perhaps, however, I expect too much. There is no reason whatsoever why the imagination should be finer in hours of dreaming than in its hours of waking. Mrs. Kingsford quotes a letter written by Jamblichus to Agathocles, in which he says: 'The soul has a twofold life, a lower and a higher. In sleep the soul is liberated from the con-

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straint of the body, and enters, as an emancipated being, on its divine life of intelligence. The nobler part of the mind is thus united by abstraction to higher natures, and becomes a participant in the wisdom and foreknowledge of the gods. . . . The night-time of the body is the day-time of the soul.' But the great masterpieces of literature and the great secrets of wisdom have not been communicated in this way; and even in Coleridge's case, though *Kubla Khan* is wonderful, it is not more wonderful, while it is certainly less complete, than the *Ancient Mariner*.

As for the dreams themselves, which occupy the first portion of the book, their value, of course, depends chiefly on the value of the truths or predictions which they are supposed to impart. I must confess that most modern mysticism seems to me to be simply a method of imparting useless knowledge in a form that no one can understand. Allegory, parable, and vision have their high artistic uses, but their philosophical and scientific uses are very small. However, here is one of Mrs. Kingsford's dreams. It has a pleasant quaintness about it:

THE WONDERFUL SPECTACLES

I was walking alone on the sea-shore. The day was singularly clear and sunny. Inland lay the most beautiful landscape ever seen; and far off were ranges of tall hills, the highest peaks of which were white with glittering snows. Along the sands by the sea came towards me a man accoutred as a postman. He gave me a letter. It was from you. It ran thus:

'I have got hold of the earliest and most precious book extant. It was written before the world began. The text is easy enough to read; but the notes, which are very copious and numerous, are in such minute and obscure characters that I cannot make them out. I want you to get for me the spectacles which Swedenborg used to wear; not the smaller

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pair—those he gave to Hans Christian Andersen—but the large pair, and these seem to have got mislaid. I think they are Spinoza's make. You know, he was an optical-glass maker by profession, and the best we ever had. See if you can get them for me.'

When I looked up after reading this letter I saw the postman hastening away across the sands, and I cried out to him, 'Stop! how am I to send the answer? Will you not wait for it?'

He looked round, stopped, and came back to me.

'I have the answer here,' he said, tapping his letter-bag, 'and I shall deliver it immediately.'

'How can you have the answer before I have written it?' I asked. 'You are making a mistake.'

'No,' he said. 'In the city from which I come the replies are all written at the office, and sent out with the letters themselves. Your reply is in my bag.'

'Let me see it,' I said. He took another letter from his wallet, and gave it to me. I opened it, and read, in my own handwriting, this answer, addressed to you:

'The spectacles you want can be bought in London; but you will not be able to use them at once, for they have not been worn for many years, and they sadly want cleaning. This you will not be able to do yourself in London, because it is too dark there to see well, and because your fingers are not small enough to clean them properly. Bring them here to me, and I will do it for you.'

I gave this letter back to the postman. He smiled and nodded at me; and then I perceived, to my astonishment, that he wore a camel's-hair tunic round his waist. I had been on the point of addressing him—I know not why—as *Hermes*. But I now saw that he must be John the Baptist; and in my fright at having spoken to so great a Saint I awoke.

Mr. Maitland, who edits the present volume, and who was joint-author with Mrs. Kingsford of that curious book *The Perfect Way*, states in a footnote that in the present instance the dreamer knew nothing of Spinoza at the time, and was quite unaware that he was an optician; and the interpretation of the dream,

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as given by him, is that the spectacles in question were intended to represent Mrs. Kingsford's remarkable faculty of intuitional and interpretative perception. For a spiritual message fraught with such meaning, the mere form of this dream seems to me somewhat ignoble, and I cannot say that I like the blending of the postman with St. John the Baptist. However, from a psychological point of view, these dreams are interesting, and Mrs. Kingsford's book is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the literature of the mysticism of the nineteenth century.

The Romance of a Shop, by Miss Amy Levy, is a more mundane book, and deals with the adventures of some young ladies who open a photographic studio in Baker Street to the horror of some of their fashionable relatives. It is so brightly and pleasantly written that the sudden introduction of a tragedy into it seems violent and unnecessary. It lacks the true tragic temper, and without this temper in literature all misfortunes and miseries seem somewhat mean and ordinary. With this exception the book is admirably done, and the style is clever and full of quick observation. Observation is perhaps the most valuable faculty for a writer of fiction. When novelists reflect and moralise, they are, as a rule, dull. But to observe life with keen vision and quick intellect, to catch its many modes of expression, to seize upon the subtlety, or satire, or dramatic quality of its situations, and to render life for us with some spirit of distinction and fine selection—this, I fancy, should be the aim of the modern realistic novelist. It would be, perhaps, too much to say that Miss Levy has distinction; this is the

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rarest quality in modern literature, though not a few of its masters are modern; but she has many other qualities which are admirable.

Faithful and Unfaithful is a powerful but not very pleasing novel. However, the object of most modern fiction is not to give pleasure to the artistic instinct, but rather to portray life vividly for us, to draw attention to social anomalies, and social forms of injustice. Many of our novelists are really pamphleteers, reformers masquerading as story-tellers, earnest sociologists seeking to mend as well as to mirror life. The heroine, or rather martyr, of Miss Margaret Lee's story is a very noble and graciously Puritanic American girl, who is married at the age of eighteen to a man whom she insists on regarding as a hero. Her husband cannot live in the high rarefied atmosphere of idealism with which she surrounds him; her firm and fearless faith in him becomes a factor in his degradation. 'You are too good for me,' he says to her in a finely conceived scene at the end of the book; 'we have not an idea, an inclination, or a passion in common. I'm sick and tired of seeming to live up to a standard that is entirely beyond my reach and my desire. We make each other miserable! I can't pull you down, and for ten years you have been exhausting yourself in vain efforts to raise me to your level. The thing must end!' He asks her to divorce him, but she refuses. He then abandons her, and availing himself of those curious facilities for breaking the marriage-tie that prevail in the United States, succeeds in divorcing her without her consent, and without her knowledge. The book is certainly characteristic of an age so practical and so literary

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as ours, an age in which all social reforms have been preceded and have been largely influenced by fiction. *Faithful and Unfaithful* seems to point to some coming change in the marriage-laws of America.

(1) *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. Edited and Selected by W. B. Yeats. (Walter Scott.)

(2) *Helen Davenant*. By Violet Fane. (Chapman and Hall.)

(3) *Dreams and Dream-Stories*. By Dr. Anna Kingsford. (Redway.)

(4) *The Romance of a Shop*. By Amy Levy. (Fisher Unwin.)

(5) *Faithful and Unfaithful*. By Margaret Lee. (Macmillan and Co.)

ONE OF THE BIBLES OF THE WORLD

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 12, 1889.)

THE *KALEVALA* is one of those poems that Mr. William Morris once described as 'The Bibles of the World.' It takes its place as a national epic beside the Homeric poems, the Niebelunge, the Shahnameth and the Mahabharata, and the admirable translation just published by Mr. John Martin Crawford is sure to be welcomed by all scholars and lovers of primitive poetry. In his very interesting preface Mr. Crawford claims for the Finns that they began earlier than any other European nation to collect and preserve their ancient folklore. In the seventeenth century we meet men of literary tastes like Palmsköld who tried to collect and interpret the various national songs of the forest-dwellers of the North. But the *Kalevala* proper was collected by two great Finnish scholars of our own century, Zacharias Topelius and Elias Lönnrot. Both were practising physicians, and in this capacity came into frequent contact with the people of Finland. Topelius, who

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collected eighty epical fragments of the *Kalevala*, spent the last eleven years of his life in bed, afflicted with a fatal disease. This misfortune, however, did not damp his enthusiasm. Mr. Crawford tells us that he used to invite the wandering Finnish merchants to his bedside and induce them to sing their heroic poems which he copied down as soon as they were uttered, and that whenever he heard of a renowned Finnish minstrel he did all in his power to bring the song-man to his house in order that he might gather new fragments of the national epic. Lönnrot travelled over the whole country, on horseback, in reindeer sledges and in canoes, collecting the old poems and songs from the hunters, the fishermen and the shepherds. The people gave him every assistance, and he had the good fortune to come across an old peasant, one of the oldest of the *runolainen* in the Russian province of Wuokinlem, who was by far the most renowned song-man of the country, and from him he got many of the most splendid runes of the poem. And certainly the *Kalevala*, as it stands, is one of the world's great poems. It is perhaps hardly accurate to describe it as an epic. It lacks the central unity of a true epic in our sense of the word. It has many heroes beside Wainomoinen and is, properly speaking, a collection of folk-songs and ballads. Of its antiquity there is no doubt. It is thoroughly pagan from beginning to end, and even the legend of the Virgin Mariatta to whom the Sun tells where 'her golden babe lies hidden'—

Yonder is thy golden infant,
There thy holy babe lies sleeping
Hidden to his belt in water,
Hidden in the reeds and rushes—

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is, according to all scholars, essentially pre-Christian in origin. The gods are chiefly gods of air and water and forest. The highest is the sky-god Ukks who is 'The Father of the Breezes,' 'The Shepherd of the Lamb-Clouds'; the lightning is his sword, the rainbow is his bow; his skirt sparkles with fire, his stockings are blue and his shoes crimson-coloured. The daughters of the Sun and Moon sit on the scarlet rims of the clouds and weave the rays of light into a gleaming web. Untar presides over fogs and mists, and passes them through a silver sieve before sending them to the earth. Ahto, the wave-god, lives with 'his cold and cruel-hearted spouse,' Wellamo, at the bottom of the sea in the chasm of the Salmon-Rocks, and possesses the priceless treasure of the Sampo, the talisman of success. When the branches of the primitive oak-trees shut out the light of the sun from the North-land, Pikku-Mies (the Pygmy) emerged from the sea in a suit of copper, with a copper hatchet in his belt, and having grown to a giant's stature felled the huge oak with the third stroke of his axe. Wirokannas is 'The Green-robed Priest of the Forest,' and Tapio, who has a coat of tree-moss and a high-crowned hat of fir-leaves, is 'The Gracious God of the Woodlands.' Otso, the bear, is the Honey-Paw of the Mountains, the 'Fur-robed Forest Friend.' In everything, visible and invisible, there is God, a divine presence. There are three worlds, and they are all peopled with divinities.

As regards the poem itself, it is written in trochaic eight-syllabled lines with alliteration and the part-line echo, the metre which Longfellow adopted for *Hiawatha*. One of its distinguishing characteristics is its wonderful passion for nature.

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and for the beauty of natural objects. Lemenkainen
says to Tapio:

Sable-bearded God of forests,
In thy hat and coat of ermine,
Robe thy trees in finest fibres,
Deck thy groves in richest fabrics,
Give the fir-trees shining silver,
Deck with gold the slender balsams,
Give the spruces copper-belting,
And the pine-trees silver girdles,
Give the birches golden flowers,
Deck their stems with silver fretwork,
This their garb in former ages
When the days and nights were brighter,
When the fir-trees shone like sunlight,
And the birches like the moonbeams;
Honey breathe throughout the forest,
Settled in the glens and highlands,
Spices in the meadow-borders,
Oil outpouring from the lowlands.

All handicrafts and art-work are, as in Homer,
elaborately described:

Then the smiter Ilmarinen
The eternal artist-forgeman,
In the furnace forged an eagle
From the fire of ancient wisdom,
For this giant bird of magic
Forged he talons out of iron,
And his beak of steel and copper;
Seats himself upon the eagle,
On his back between the wing-bones
Thus addresses he his creature,
Gives the bird of fire this order.
Mighty eagle, bird of beauty,
Fly thou whither I direct thee,
To Tuoni's coal-black river,
To the blue-depths of the Death-stream,
Seize the mighty fish of Mana,
Catch for me this water-monster.

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And Wainamoinen's boat-building is one of the great incidents of the poem :

Wainamoinen old and skilful,
The eternal wonder-worker,
Builds his vessel with enchantment,
Builds his boat by art and magic,
From the timber of the oak-tree,
Forms its posts and planks and flooring.
Sings a song and joins the framework ;
Sings a second, sets the siding ;
Sings a third time, sets the rowlocks ;
Fashions oars, and ribs, and rudder,
Joins the sides and ribs together.

Now he decks his magic vessel,
Paints the boat in blue and scarlet,
Trims in gold the ship's forecastle,
Decks the prow in molten silver ;
Sings his magic ship down gliding,
On the cylinders of fir-tree ;
Now erects the masts of pine-wood,
On each mast the sails of linen,
Sails of blue, and white, and scarlet,
Woven into finest fabric.

All the characteristics of a splendid antique civilisation are mirrored in this marvellous poem, and Mr. Crawford's admirable translation should make the wonderful heroes of Suomi song as familiar if not as dear to our people as the heroes of the great Ionian epic.

The Kalevala, the Epic Poem of Finland. Translated into English by John Martin Crawford. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

POETICAL SOCIALISTS

POETICAL SOCIALISTS

(*Pull Mall Gazette*, February 15, 1889.)

MR. STOPFORD BROOKE said some time ago that Socialism and the socialistic spirit would give our poets nobler and loftier themes for song, would widen their sympathies and enlarge the horizon of their vision and would touch, with the fire and fervour of a new faith, lips that had else been silent, hearts that but for this fresh gospel had been cold. What Art gains from contemporary events is always a fascinating problem and a problem that is not easy to solve. It is, however, certain that Socialism starts well equipped. She has her poets and her painters, her art lecturers and her cunning designers, her powerful orators and her clever writers. If she fails it will not be for lack of expression. If she succeeds her triumph will not be a triumph of mere brute force. The first thing that strikes one, as one looks over the list of contributors to Mr. Edward Carpenter's *Chants of Labour*, is the curious variety of their several occupations, the wide differences of social position that exist between them, and the strange medley of men whom a common passion has for the moment united. The editor is a 'Science lecturer'; he is followed by a draper and a porter; then we have two late Eton masters and then two boot-makers; and these are, in their turn, succeeded by an ex-Lord Mayor of Dublin, a bookbinder, a photographer, a steel-worker and an authoress. On one page we have a journalist, a draughtsman and a music-teacher: and on another a Civil servant, a machine fitter, a medical student, a cabinet-maker

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and a minister of the Church of Scotland. Certainly, it is no ordinary movement that can bind together in close brotherhood men of such dissimilar pursuits, and when we mention that Mr. William Morris is one of the singers, and that Mr. Walter Crane has designed the cover and frontispiece of the book, we cannot but feel that, as we pointed out before, Socialism starts well equipped.

As for the songs themselves, some of them, to quote from the editor's preface, are 'purely revolutionary, others are Christian in tone; there are some that might be called merely material in their tendency, while many are of a highly ideal and visionary character.' This is, on the whole, very promising. It shows that Socialism is not going to allow herself to be trammelled by any hard and fast creed or to be stereotyped into an iron formula. She welcomes many and multiform natures. She rejects none and has room for all. She has the attraction of a wonderful personality and touches the heart of one and the brain of another, and draws this man by his hatred of injustice, and his neighbour by his faith in the future, and a third, it may be, by his love of art or by his wild worship of a lost and buried past. And all of this is well. For, to make men Socialists is nothing, but to make Socialism human is a great thing.

They are not of any very high literary value, these poems that have been so dexterously set to music. They are meant to be sung, not to be read. They are rough, direct and vigorous, and the tunes are stirring and familiar. Indeed, almost any mob could warble them with ease. The transpositions that have been made are rather amusing. *'Twas in Trafalgar Square* is set to the tune of *'Twas in*

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Trafalgar's Bay; Up, Ye People! a very revolutionary song by Mr. John Gregory, boot-maker, with a refrain of

Up, ye People! or down into your graves!
Cowards ever will be slaves!

is to be sung to the tune of *Rule, Britannia!* the old melody of *The Vicar of Bray* is to accompany the new *Ballade of Law and Order*—which, however, is not a ballade at all—and to the air of *Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen* the democracy of the future is to thunder forth one of Mr. T. D. Sullivan's most powerful and pathetic lyrics. It is clear that the Socialists intend to carry on the musical education of the people simultaneously with their education in political science and, here as elsewhere, they seem to be entirely free from any narrow bias or formal prejudice. Mendelssohn is followed by Moody and Sankey; the *Wacht am Rhein* stands side by side with the *Marseillaise*; *Lillibulero*, a chorus from *Norma*, *John Brown* and an air from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* are all equally delightful to them. They sing the National Anthem in Shelley's version and chant William Morris's *Voice of Toil* to the flowing numbers of *Ye Banks and Braes of Bonny Doon*. Victor Hugo talks somewhere of the terrible cry of 'Le Tigre Populaire,' but it is evident from Mr. Carpenter's book that should the Revolution ever break out in England we shall have no inarticulate roar but, rather, pleasant glees and graceful part-songs. The change is certainly for the better. Nero fiddled while Rome was burning—at least, inaccurate historians say he did; but it is for the building up of an eternal city that the Socialists of our day are

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making music, and they have complete confidence in the art instincts of the people.

They say that the people are brutal—
That their instincts of beauty are dead—
Were it so, shame on those who condemn them
To the desperate struggle for bread.
But they lie in their throats when they say it,
For the people are tender at heart,
And a wellspring of beauty lies hidden
Beneath their life's fever and smart,

is a stanza from one of the poems in this volume, and the feeling expressed in these words is paramount everywhere. The Reformation gained much from the use of popular hymn-tunes, and the Socialists seem determined to gain by similar means a similar hold upon the people. However, they must not be too sanguine about the result. The walls of Thebes rose up to the sound of music, and Thebes was a very dull city indeed.

Chants of Labour: A Song-Book of the People. With Music. Edited by Edward Carpenter. With Designs by Walter Crane. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

MR. BRANDER MATTHEWS' ESSAYS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 27, 1880.)

IF you want to have your book criticized favorably, give yourself a good notice in the Preface! is the golden rule laid down for the guidance of authors by Mr. Brander Matthews in an amusing essay on the art of preface-writing and, true to his own theory, he announces his volume as 'the most interesting, the most entertaining, and the most instructive book of the decade.' Entertaining it certainly is in parts. The essay on Poker, for instance, is very brightly and pleasantly written. Mr. Proctor objected to Poker on the somewhat

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trivial ground that it was a form of lying, and on the more serious ground that it afforded special opportunities for cheating; and, indeed, he regarded the mere existence of the game outside gambling dens as 'one of the most portentous phenomena of American civilisation.' Mr. Brander Matthews points out, in answer to these grave charges, that Bluffing is merely a *suppressio veri* and that it requires a great deal of physical courage on the part of the player. As for the cheating, he claims that Poker affords no more opportunities for the exercise of this art than either Whist or Ecarté, though he admits that the proper attitude towards an opponent whose good luck is unduly persistent is that of the German-American who, finding four aces in his hand, was naturally about to bet heavily, when a sudden thought struck him and he inquired, 'Who dole dem carts?' 'Jakey Einstein' was the answer. 'Jakey Einstein?' he repeated, laying down his hand; 'den I pass out.'

The history of the game will be found very interesting by all card-lovers. Like most of the distinctly national products of America, it seems to have been imported from abroad and can be traced back to an Italian game in the fifteenth century. Euchre was probably acclimatised on the Mississippi by the Canadian *voyageurs*, being a form of the French game of *Triomphe*. It was a Kentucky citizen who, desiring to give his sons a few words of solemn advice for their future guidance in life, had them summoned to his deathbed and said to them, 'Boys, when you go down the river to Orleans jest you beware of a game called Yucker where the jack takes the ace;—it's unchristian!'—after which warning he lay back and died in peace. And 'it was Euchre which the two gentlemen were playing in a boat on

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the Missouri River when a bystander, shocked by the frequency with which one of the players turned up the jack, took the liberty of warning the other player that the winner was dealing from the bottom, to which the loser, secure in his power of self-protection, answered gruffly, "Well, suppose he is—it's his deal, isn't it?"

The chapter *On the Antiquity of Jests*, with its suggestion of an International Exhibition of Jokes, is capital. Such an exhibition, Mr. Matthews remarks, would at least dispel any lingering belief in the old saying that there are only thirty-eight good stories in existence and that thirty-seven of these cannot be told before ladies; and the Retrospective Section would certainly be the constant resort of any true folklorist. For most of the good stories of our time are really folklore, myth survivals, echoes of the past. The two well-known American proverbs, 'We have had a hell of a time' and 'Let the other man walk' are both traced back by Mr. Matthews: the first to Walpole's letters, and the other to a story Poggio tells of an inhabitant of Perugia who walked in melancholy because he could not pay his debts. 'Vah, stulte,' was the advice given to him, 'leave anxiety to your creditors!' and even Mr. William M. Evart's brilliant repartee when he was told that Washington once threw a dollar across the Natural Bridge in Virginia, 'In those days a dollar went so much farther than it does now!' seems to be the direct descendant of a witty remark of Foote's, though we must say that in this case we prefer the child to the father. The essay *On the French Spoken by Those who do not Speak French* is also cleverly written and, indeed, on every subject, except literature, Mr. Matthews is well worth reading.

MR. BRANDER MATTHEWS' ESSAYS

On literature and literary subjects he is certainly 'sadly to seek.' The essay on *The Ethics of Plagiarism*, with its laborious attempt to rehabilitate Mr. Rider Haggard and its foolish remarks on Poe's admirable paper *Mr. Longfellow and Other Plagiarists*, is extremely dull and commonplace and, in the elaborate comparison that he draws between Mr. Frederick Locker and Mr. Austin Dobson, the author of *Pen and Ink* shows that he is quite devoid of any real critical faculty or of any fine sense of the difference between ordinary society verse and the exquisite work of a very perfect artist in poetry. We have no objection to Mr. Matthews likening Mr. Locker to Mr. du Maurier, and Mr. Dobson to Randolph Caldecott and Mr. Edwin Abbey. Comparisons of this kind, though extremely silly, do not do much harm. In fact, they mean nothing and are probably not intended to mean anything. Upon the other hand, we really must protest against Mr. Matthews' efforts to confuse the poetry of Piccadilly with the poetry of Parnassus. To tell us, for instance, that Mr. Austin Dobson's verse 'has not the condensed clearness nor the incisive vigor of Mr. Locker's' is really too bad even for Transatlantic criticism. Nobody who lays claim to the slightest knowledge of literature and the forms of literature should ever bring the two names into conjunction. Mr. Locker has written some pleasant *vers de société*, some tuneful trifles in rhyme admirably suited for ladies' albums and for magazines. But to mention Herrick and Suckling and Mr. Austin Dobson in connection with him is absurd. He is not a poet. Mr. Dobson, upon the other hand, has produced work that is absolutely classical in its exquisite beauty of form. Nothing more artistically perfect in its way than the *Lines to*

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a Greek Girl has been written in our time. This little poem will be remembered in literature as long as *Thyrsis* is remembered, and *Thyrsis* will never be forgotten. Both have that note of distinction that is so rare in these days of violence, exaggeration and rhetoric. Of course, to suggest, as Mr. Matthews does, that Mr. Dobson's poems belong to 'the literature of power' is ridiculous. Power is not their aim, nor is it their effect. They have other qualities, and in their own delicately limited sphere they have no contemporary rivals; they have none even second to them. However, Mr. Matthews is quite undaunted and tries to drag poor Mr. Locker out of Piccadilly, where he was really quite in his element, and to set him on Parnassus where he has no right to be and where he would not claim to be. He praises his work with the recklessness of an eloquent auctioneer. 'These very commonplace and slightly vulgar lines on *A Human Skull* :

It may have held (to shoot some random shots)
Thy brains, Eliza Fry! or Baron Byron's;
The wits of Nelly Gwynne or Doctor Watts—
Two quoted bards. Two philanthropic sirens.

But this, I trust, is clearly understood,
If man or woman, if adored or hated—
Whoever own'd this Skull was not so good
Nor quite so bad as many may have stated;

are considered by him to be 'sportive and bris' some' and full of 'playful humor,' and 'two th. especially are to be noted in them—individuality and directness of expression.' Individuality and directness of expression! We wonder what Mr. Matthews thinks these words mean.

Unfortunate Mr. Locker with his uncouth American admirer! How he must blush to read these

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heavy panegyrics! Indeed, Mr. Matthews himself has at least one fit of remorse for his attempt to class Mr. Locker's work with the work of Mr. Austin Dobson, but like most fits of remorse it leads to nothing. On the very next page we have the complaint that Mr. Dobson's verse has not 'the condensed clearness' and the 'incisive vigor' of Mr. Locker's. Mr. Matthews should confine himself to his clever journalistic articles on Euchre, Poker, bad French and old jokes. On these subjects he can, to use an expression of his own, 'write funny.' He 'writes funny,' too, upon literature, but the fun is not quite so amusing.

Pen and Ink: Papers on Subjects of More or Less Importance. By Brander Matthews. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

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III

(*Woman's World*, March 1889.)

MISS NESBIT has already made herself a name as a writer of graceful and charming verse, and though her last volume, *Leaves of Life*, does not show any distinct advance on her former work, it still fully maintains the high standard already achieved, and justifies the reputation of the author. There are some wonderfully pretty poems in it, poems full of quick touches of fancy, and of pleasant ripples of rhyme; and here and there a poignant note of passion flashes across the song, as a scarlet thread flashes through the shuttlerace of a loom, giving a new value to the delicate tints, and bringing the scheme of colour to a higher and more perfect key. In Miss Nesbit's

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earlier volume, the *Lays and Legends*, as it was called, there was an attempt to give poetic form to humanitarian dreams and socialistic aspirations; but the poems that dealt with these subjects were, on the whole, the least successful of the collection; and with the quick, critical instinct of an artist, Miss Nesbit seems to have recognised this. In the present volume, at any rate, such poems are rare, and these few felicitous verses give us the poet's defence:

A singer sings of rights and wrongs,
Of world's ideals vast and bright,
And feels the impotence of songs
To scourge the wrong or help the right;
And only writhes to feel how vain
Are songs as weapons for his fight;
And so he turns to love again,
And sings of love for heart's delight.

For heart's delight the singers bind
The wreath of roses round the head,
And will not loose it lest they find
Time victor, and the roses dead.
'Man can but sing of what he knows—
I saw the roses fresh and red!'
And so they sing the deathless rose,
With withered roses garlanded.

And some within their bosom hide
Their rose of love still fresh and fair,
And walk in silence, satisfied
To keep its folded fragrance rare.
And some—who bear a flag unfurled—
Wreath with their rose the flag they bear,
And sing their banner for the world,
And for their heart the roses there.

Yet thus much choice in singing is;
We sing the good, the true, the just,
Passionate duty turned to bliss,
And honour growing out of trust.

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Freedom we sing, and would not lose
Her lightest footprint in life's dust,
We sing of her because we choose,
We sing of love because we must.

Certainly Miss Nesbit is at her best when she sings of love and nature. Here she is close to her subject, and her temperament gives colour and form to the various dramatic moods that are either suggested by Nature herself or brought to Nature for interpretation. This, for instance, is very sweet and graceful:

When all the skies with snow were grey,
And all the earth with snow was white,
I wandered down a still wood way,
And there I met my heart's delight
Slow moving through the silent wood,
The spirit of its solitude:
The brown birds and the lichened tree
Seemed less a part of it than she.

Where pheasants' feet and rabbits' feet
Had marked the snow with traces small,
I saw the footprints of my sweet—
The sweetest woodland thing of all.
With Christmas roses in her hand,
One heart-beat's space I saw her stand;
And then I let her pass, and stood
Lone in an empty world of wood.

And though by that same path I've passed
Down that same woodland every day,
That meeting was the first and last,
And she is hopelessly away.
I wonder was she really there—
Her hands, and eyes, and lips, and hair?
Or was it but my dreaming sent
Her image down the way I went?

Empty the woods are where we met—
They will be empty in the spring;
The cowslip and the violet
Will die without her gathering.

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But dare I dream one radiant day
Red rose-wreathed she will pass this way
Across the glad and honoured grass;
And then—I will not let her pass.

And this Dedication, with its tender silver-grey notes of colour, is charming :

In any meadow where your feet may tread,
In any garland that your love may wear,
May be the flower whose hidden fragrance shed
Wakes some old hope or numbs some old despair,
And makes life's grief not quite so hard to bear,
And makes life's joy more poignant and more dear
Because of some delight dead many a year.

Or in some cottage garden there may be
The flower whose scent is memory for you;
The sturdy southern-wood, the frail sweet-pea,
Bring back the swallow's cheep, the pigeon's coo,
And youth, and hope, and all the dreams they knew,
The evening star, the hedges grey with mist,
The silent porch where Love's first kiss was kissed.

So in my garden may you chance to find
Or royal rose or quiet meadow flower,
Whose scent may be with some dear dream entwined,
And give you back the ghost of some sweet hour,
As lilies fragrant from an August shower,
Or airs of June that over bean-fields blow,
Bring back the sweetness of my long ago.

All through the volume we find the same dexterous refining of old themes, which is indeed the best thing that our lesser singers can give us, and a thing always delightful. There is no garden so well tilled but it can bear another blossom, and though the subject-matter of Miss Nesbit's book is as the subject-matter of almost all books of poetry, she can certainly lend a new grace and a subtle sweetness to almost everything on which she writes.

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The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems is from the clever pen of Mr. W. B. Yeats, whose charming anthology of Irish fairy-tales I had occasion to notice in a recent number of the *Woman's World*.¹ It is, I believe, the first volume of poems that Mr. Yeats has published, and it is certainly full of promise. It must be admitted that many of the poems are too fragmentary, too incomplete. They read like stray scenes out of unfinished plays, like things only half remembered, or, at best, but dimly seen. But the architectonic power of construction, the power to build up and make perfect a harmonious whole, is nearly always the latest, as it certainly is the highest, development of the artistic temperament. It is somewhat unfair to expect it in early work. One quality Mr. Yeats has in a marked degree, a quality that is not common in the work of our minor poets, and is therefore all the more welcome to us—I mean the romantic temper. He is essentially Celtic, and his verse, at its best, is Celtic also. Strongly influenced by Keats, he seems to study how to 'load every rift with ore,' yet is more fascinated by the beauty of words than by the beauty of metrical music. The spirit that dominates the whole book is perhaps more valuable than any individual poem or particular passage, but this from *The Wanderings of Oisín* is worth quoting. It describes the ride to the Island of Forgetfulness:

And the ears of the horse went sinking away in the hollow light,
For, as drift from a sailor slow drowning the gleams of the
world and the sun,
Ceased on our hands and faces, on hazel and oak leaf, the light,
And the stars were blotted above us, and the whole of the
world was one;

¹ See page 400i.

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Till the horse gave a whinny; for cumbrous with stems of the
hazel and oak,

Of hollies, and hazels, and oak-trees, a valley was sloping away
From his hoofs in the heavy grasses, with monstrous slumbering
folk,

Their mighty and naked and gleaming bodies heaped loose
where they lay.

More comely than man may make them, inlaid with silver and
gold,

Were arrow and shield and war-axe, arrow and spear and blade,
And dew-blaunched horns, in whose hollows a child of three years
old

Could sleep on a couch of rushes, round and about them laid.

And this, which deals with the old legend of the
city lying under the waters of a lake, is strange and
interesting:

The maker of the stars and world!

Sat underneath the market cross
And the old men were walking, walking,
And little boys played pitch-and-toss.

'The props,' said He, 'of stars and worlds
Are prayers of patient men and good.'
The boys, the women, and old men,
Listening, upon their shadows stood.

A grey professor passing cried,
'How few the mind's intemperance rule!
What shallow thoughts about deep things!
The world grows old and plays the fool.'

The mayor came, leaning his left ear—
There were some talking of the poor—
And to himself cried, 'Communist!'
And hurried to the guardhouse door.

The bishop came with open book,
Whispering along the sunny path;
There was some talking of man's God,
His God of stupor and of wrath.

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The bishop murmured, 'Atheist !
How sinfully the wicked scoff !'
And sent the old men on their way,
And drove the boys and women off.

The place was empty now of people ;
A cock came by upon his toes ;
An old horse looked across the fence,
And rubbed along the rail his nose.

The maker of the stars and worlds
To His own house did Him betake,
And on that city dropped a tear,
And now that city is a lake.

Mr. Yeats has a great deal of invention, and some of the poems in his book, such as *Mosada*, *Jealousy*, and *The Island of Statues*, are very finely conceived. It is impossible to doubt, after reading his present volume, that he will some day give us work of high import. Up to this he has been merely trying the strings of his instrument, running over the keys.

Lady Munster's *Dorinda* is an exceedingly clever novel. The heroine is a sort of well-born Becky Sharp, only much more beautiful than Becky, or at least than Thackeray's portraits of her, which, however, have always seemed to me rather ill-natured. I feel sure that Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was extremely pretty, and I have never understood how it was that Thackeray could caricature with his pencil so fascinating a creation of his pen. In the first chapter of Lady Munster's novel we find Dorinda at a fashionable school, and the sketches of the three old ladies who preside over the select seminary are very amusing. Dorinda is not very popular, and grave suspicions rest upon her of having stolen a cheque. This is a startling *début* for a heroine, and I was a little afraid at first that Dorinda, after undergoing

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endless humiliations, would be proved innocent in the last chapter. It was quite a relief to find that Dorinda was guilty. In fact, Dorinda is a kleptomaniac; that is to say, she is a member of the upper classes who spends her time in collecting works of art that do not belong to her. This, however, is only one of her accomplishments, and it does not occupy any important place in the story till the last volume is reached. Here we find Dorinda married to a Styrian Prince, and living in the luxury for which she had always longed. Unfortunately, while staying in the house of a friend she is detected stealing some rare enamels. Her punishment, as described by Lady Munster, is extremely severe; and when she finally commits suicide, maddened by the imprisonment to which her husband had subjected her, it is difficult not to feel a good deal of pity for her. Lady Munster writes a very clever, bright style, and has a wonderful faculty of drawing in a few sentences the most lifelike portraits of social types and social exceptions. Sir Jasper Broke and his sister, the Duke and Duchess of Cheviotdale. Lord and Lady Glenalmond, and Lord Baltimore, are all admirably drawn. The 'novel of high life,' as it used to be called, has of late years fallen into disrepute. Instead of duchesses in Mayfair, we have philanthropic young ladies in Whitechapel; and the fashionable and brilliant young dandies, in whom Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton took such delight, have been entirely wiped out as heroes of fiction by hard-working curates in the East End. The aim of most of our modern novelists seems to be, not to write good novels, but to write novels that will do good: and I am afraid that they are under the impression that fashionable life is not an edifying subject.

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They wish to reform the morals, rather than to portray the manners of their age. They have made the novel the mode of propaganda. It is possible, however, that *Dorinda* points to some coming change, and certainly it would be a pity if the Muse of Fiction confined her attention entirely to the East End.

The four remarkable women whom Mrs. Walford has chosen as the subjects of her *Four Biographies from 'Blackwood'* are Jane Taylor, Elizabeth Fry, Hannah More, and Mary Somerville. Perhaps it is too much to say that Jane Taylor is remarkable. In her day she was said to have been 'known to four continents,' and Sir Walter Scott described her as 'among the first women of her time'; but no one now cares to read *Essays in Rhyme*, or *Display*, though the latter is really a very clever novel and full of capital things. Elizabeth Fry is, of course, one of the great personalities of this century, at any rate in the particular sphere to which she devoted herself, and ranks with the many uncanonised saints whom the world has loved, and whose memory is sweet. Mrs. Walford gives a most interesting account of her. We see her first a gay, laughing, flaxen-haired girl, 'mightily addicted to fun,' pleased to be finely dressed and sent to the opera to see the 'Prince,' and be seen by him; pleased to exhibit her pretty figure in a becoming scarlet riding habit, and to be looked at with obvious homage by the young officers quartered hard by, as she rode along the Norfolk lanes; 'dissipated' by simply hearing their band play in the square, and made giddy by the veriest trifle: 'an idle, flirting, worldly girl,' to use her own words. Then came the eventful day when

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'in purple boots laced with scarlet' she went to hear William Savery preach at the Meeting House. This was the turning-point of her life, her psychological moment, as the phrase goes. After it came the era of 'thees' and 'thous,' of the drab gown and the beaver hat, of the visits to Newgate and the convict ships, of the work of rescuing the outcast and seeking the lost. Mrs. Walford quotes the following interesting account of the famous interview with Queen Charlotte at the Mansion-House :

Inside the Egyptian Hall there was a subject for Hayter—the diminutive stature of the Queen, covered with diamonds, and her countenance lighted up with the kindest benevolence ; Mrs. Fry, her simple Quaker's dress adding to the height of her figure—though a little flushed—preserving her wonted calmness of look and manner ; several of the bishops standing near ; the platform crowded with waving feathers, jewels, and orders ; the hall lined with spectators, gaily and nobly clad, and the centre filled with hundreds of children, brought there from their different schools to be examined. A murmur of applause ran through the assemblage as the Queen took Mrs. Fry by the hand. The murmur was followed by a clap and a shout, which was taken up by the multitudes without till it died away in the distance.

Those who regard Hannah More as a prim maiden lady of the conventional type, with a pious and literary turn of mind, will be obliged to change their views should they read Mrs. Walford's admirable sketch of the authoress of *Percy*. Hannah More was a brilliant wit, a *femme d'esprit*, passionately fond of society, and loved by society in return. When the serious-minded little country girl, who at the age of eight had covered a whole quire of paper with letters seeking to reform imaginary depraved characters, and with return epistles full of contrition and promises of amendment, paid her first visit to

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London, she became at once the intimate friend of Johnson, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick, and most of the distinguished people of the day, delighting them by her charm, and grace, and wit. 'I dined at the Adelphi yesterday,' she writes in one of her letters. 'Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in more perfect good-humour. After all had risen to go we stood round them for above an hour, laughing, in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield. I believe we should never have thought of sitting down, nor of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferating. Johnson outstaid them all, and sat with me for half an hour.' The following is from her sister's pen :

On Tuesday evening we drank tea at Sir Joshua's with Dr Johnson. Hannah is certainly a great favourite. She was placed next him, and they had the entire conversation to themselves. They were both in remarkably high spirits, and it was certainly her lucky night ; I never heard her say so many good things. The old genius was as jocular as the young one was pleasant. You would have imagined we were at some comedy had you heard our peals of laughter. They certainly tried which could 'pepper the highest,' and it is not clear to me that the lexicographer was really the highest seasoner.

Hannah More was certainly, as Mrs. Walford says, 'the fêted and caressed idol of society.' The theatre at Bristol vaunted, 'Boast we not a More?' and the learned cits at Oxford inscribed their acknowledgment of her authority. Horace Walpole sat on the doorstep—or threatened to do so—till she promised to go down to Strawberry Hill; Foster quoted her; Mrs. Thrale twined her arms about her; Wilberforce consulted her and employed her. When *The Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable*

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World was published anonymously, 'Aut Morus, aut Angelus,' exclaimed the Bishop of London, before he had read six pages. Of her village stories and ballads two million copies were sold during the first year. *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* ran into thirty editions. Mrs. Barbauld writes to tell her about 'a good and sensible woman' of her acquaintance, who, on being asked how she contrived to divert herself in the country, replied, 'I have my spinning-wheel and my Hannah More. When I have spun one pound of flax I put on another, and when I have finished my book I begin it again. *I want no other amusement.*' How incredible it all sounds! No wonder that Mrs. Walford exclaims, 'No other amusement! Good heavens! Breathes there a man, woman, or child with soul so quiescent nowadays as to be satisfied with reels of flax and yards of Hannah More? Give us Hannah's company, but not—not her writings!' It is only fair to say that Mrs. Walford has thoroughly carried out the views she expresses in this passage, for she gives us nothing of Hannah More's grandiloquent literary productions, and yet succeeds in making us know her thoroughly. The whole book is well written, but the biography of Hannah More is a wonderfully brilliant sketch, and deserves great praise.

Miss Mabel Wotton has invented a new form of picture-gallery. Feeling that the visible aspect of men and women can be expressed in literature no less than through the medium of line and colour, she has collected together a series of *Word Portraits of Famous Writers* extending from Geoffrey Chaucer to Mrs. Henry Wood. It is a far cry from the author of the *Canterbury Tales* to the authoress of

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East Lynne; but as a beauty, at any rate, Mrs. Wood deserved to be described, and we hear of the pure oval of her face, of her perfect mouth, her 'dazzling' complexion, and the extraordinary youth by which 'she kept to the last the . . . freshness of a young girl.' Many of the 'famous writers' seem to have been very ugly. Thomson, the poet, was of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; Richardson looked 'like a plump white mouse in a wig.' Pope is described in the *Guardian*, in 1718, as 'a lively little creature, with long arms and legs: a spider is no ill emblem of him. He has been taken at a distance for a small windmill.' Charles Kingsley appears as 'rather tall, very angular, surprisingly awkward, with thin staggering legs, a hatchet face adorned with scraggy gray whiskers, a faculty for falling into the most ungainly attitudes, and making the most hideous contortions of visage and frame; with a rough provincial accent and an uncouth way of speaking which would be set down for absurd caricature on the boards of a comic theatre.' Lamb is described by Carlyle as 'the leanest of mankind: tiny black breeches buttoned to the knee-cap and no further, surmounting spindle legs also in black, face and head fineish, black, bony, lean, and of a Jew type rather'; and Talfourd says that the best portrait of him is his own description of Braham—'a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel.' William Godwin was 'short and stout, his clothes loosely and carelessly put on, and usually old and worn; his hands were generally in his pockets; he had a remarkably large, bald head, and a weak voice; seeming generally half asleep when he walked, and even when he talked.' Lord Charlemont spoke of David

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Hume as more like a 'turtle-eating alderman' than 'a refined philosopher.' Mary Russell Mitford was ill-naturedly described by L.E.L. as 'Sancho Panza in petticoats!'; and as for poor Rogers, who was somewhat cadaverous, the descriptions given of him are quite dreadful. Lord Dudley once asked him 'why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up his hearse,' and it is said that Sydney Smith gave him mortal offence by recommending him 'when he sat for his portrait to be drawn saying his prayers, with his face hidden in his hands,' christened him the 'Death dandy,' and wrote underneath a picture of him, 'Painted in his lifetime.' We must console ourselves—if not with Mr. Hardy's statement that 'ideal physical beauty is incompatible with mental development, and a full recognition of the evil of things'—at least with the pictures of those who had some comeliness, and grace, and charm. Dr. Grosart says of a miniature of Edmund Spenser, 'It is an exquisitely beautiful face. The brow is ample, the lips thin but mobile, the eyes a grayish-blue, the hair and beard a golden red (as of "red monie" of the ballads) or goldenly chestnut, the nose with semi-transparent nostril and keen, the chin firm-poised, the expression refined and delicate. Altogether just such "presentiment" of the Poet of Beauty *par excellence* as one would have imagined.' Antony Wood describes Sir Richard Lovelace as being, at the age of sixteen, 'the most amiable and beautiful person that ever eye beheld.' Nor need we wonder at this when we remember the portrait of Lovelace that hangs at Dulwich College. Barry Cornwall, described himself by S. C. Hall as 'a decidedly rather pretty little fellow,' said of Keats: 'His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular

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beauty and brightness,—it had an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight.' Chatterton and Byron were splendidly handsome, and beauty of a high spiritual order may be claimed both for Milton and Shelley, though an industrious gentleman lately wrote a book in two volumes apparently for the purpose of proving that the latter of these two poets had a snub nose. Hazlitt once said that 'A man's life may be a lie to himself and others, and yet a picture painted of him by a great artist would probably stamp his character.' Few of the word-portraits in Miss Wotton's book can be said to have been drawn by a great artist, but they are all interesting, and Miss Wotton has certainly shown a wonderful amount of industry in collecting her references and in grouping them. It is not a book to be read through from beginning to end, but it is a delightful book to glance at, and by its means one can raise the ghosts of the dead, at least as well as the Psychical Society can.

- (1) *Leaves of Life*. By E. Nesbit. (Longmans, Green and Co.)
- (2) *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*. By W. B. Yeats. (Kegan Paul.)
- (3) *Dorinda*. By Lady Munster. (Hurst and Blackett.)
- (4) *Four Biographies from 'Blackwood.'* By Mrs. Walford. (Blackwood and Sons.)
- (5) *Word Portraits of Famous Writers*. Edited by Mabel Wotton. (Bentley and Son.)

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(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 2, 1889.)

MR. MORRIS'S last book is a piece of pure art workmanship from beginning to end, and the very remoteness of its style from the common language and ordinary interests of

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our day gives to the whole story a strange beauty and an unfamiliar charm. It is written in blended prose and verse, like the mediæval 'cante-fable,' and tells the tale of the House of the Wolfings in its struggles against the legionaries of Rome then advancing into Northern Germany. It is a kind of Saga, and the language in which the folk-epic, as we may call it, is set forth recalls the antique dignity and directness of our English tongue four centuries ago. From an artistic point of view it may be described as an attempt to return by a self-conscious effort to the conditions of an earlier and a fresher age. Attempts of this kind are not uncommon in the history of art. From some such feeling came the Pre-Raphaelite movement of our own day and the archaistic movement of later Greek sculpture. When the result is beautiful the method is justified, and no shrill insistence upon a supposed necessity for absolute modernity of form can prevail against the value of work that has the incomparable excellence of style. Certainly, Mr. Morris's work possesses this excellence. His fine harmonies and rich cadences create in the reader that spirit by which alone can its own spirit be interpreted, awake in him something of the temper of romance and, by taking him out of his own age, place him in a truer and more vital relation to the great masterpieces of all time. It is a bad thing for an age to be always looking in art for its own reflection. It is well that, now and then, we are given work that is nobly imaginative in its method and purely artistic in its aim. As we read Mr. Morris's story with its fine alternations of verse and prose, its decorative and descriptive beauties, its wonderful handling of romantic and adventurous themes we cannot but

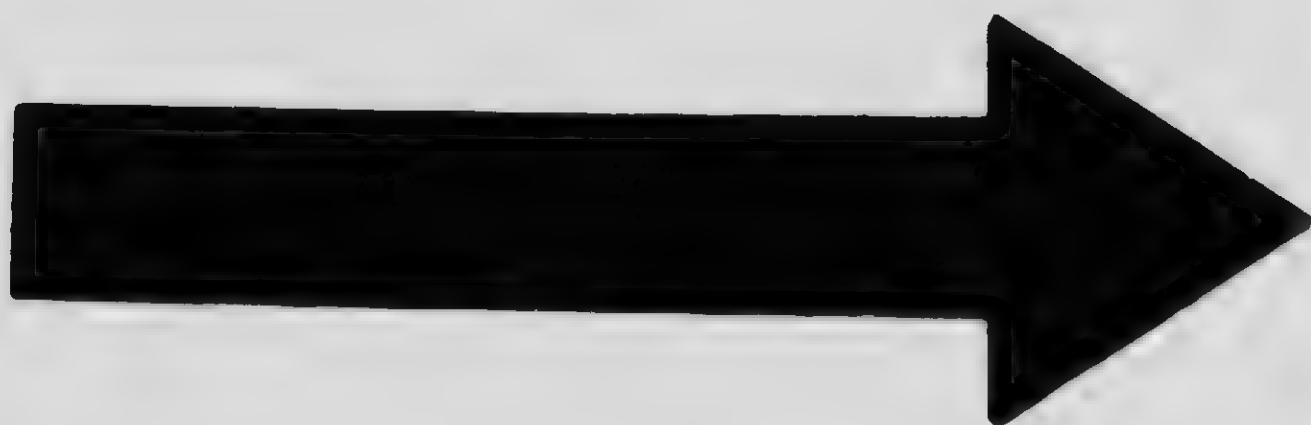
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feel that we are as far removed from the ignoble fiction as we are from the ignoble facts of our own day. We breathe a purer air, and have dreams of a time when life had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and was simple and stately and complete.

The tragic interest of *The House of the Wolfings* centres round the figure of Thiodolf, the great hero of the tribe. The goddess who loves him gives him, as he goes to battle against the Romans, a magical hauberk on which rests this strange fate: that he who wears it shall save his own life and destroy the life of his land. Thiodolf, finding out this secret, brings the hauberk back to the Wood-Sun, as she is called, and chooses death for himself rather than the ruin of his cause, and so the story ends.

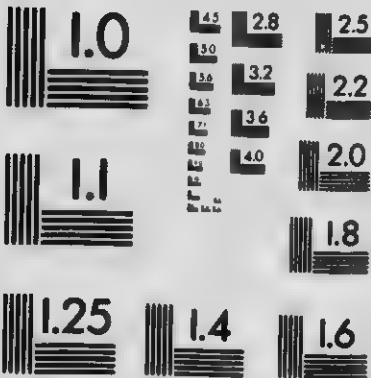
But Mr. Morris has always preferred romance to tragedy, and set the development of action above the concentration of passion. His story is like some splendid old tapestry crowded with stately images and enriched with delicate and delightful detail. The impression it leaves on us is not of a single central figure dominating the whole, but rather of a magnificent design to which everything is subordinated, and by which everything becomes of enduring import. It is the whole presentation of the primitive life that really fascinates. What in other hands would have been mere archaeology is here transformed by quick artistic instinct and made wonderful for us, and human and full of high interest. The ancient world seems to have come to life again for our pleasure.

Of a work so large and so coherent, completed with no less perfection than it is conceived, it is difficult by mere quotation to give any adequate



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idea. This, however, may serve as an example of its narrative power. The passage describes the visit of Thiodolf to the Wood-Sun :

The moonlight lay in a great flood on the grass without, and the dew was falling in the coldest hour of the night, and the earth smelled sweetly : the whole habitation was asleep now, and there was no sound to be known as the sound of any creature, save that from the distant meadow came the lowing of a cow that had lost her calf, and that a white owl was flitting about near the eaves of the Roof with her wild cry that sounded like the mocking of merriment now silent. Thiodolf turned toward the wood, and walked steadily through the scattered hazel-trees, and thereby into the thick of the beech-trees, whose boles grew smooth and silver-grey, high and close-set : and so on and on he went as one going by a well-known path, though there was no path, till all the moonlight was quenched under the close roof of the beech-leaves, though yet for all the darkness, no man could go there and not feel that the roof was green above him. Still he went on in despite of the darkness, till at last there was a glimmer before him, that grew greater till he came unto a small wood-lawn whereon the turf grew again, though the grass was but thin, because little sunlight got to it, so close and thick were the tall trees round about it. . . . Nought looked Thiodolf either at the heavens above, or the trees, as he strode from off the husk-strewn floor of the beech wood on to the scanty grass of the lawn, but his eyes looked straight before him at that which was amidmost of the lawn : and little wonder was that : for there on a stone chair sat a woman exceeding fair, clad in glittering raiment, her hair lying as pale in the moonlight on the grey stone as the barley acres in the August night before the reaping-hook goes in amongst them. She sat there as though she were awaiting some one, and he made no stop nor stay, but went straight up to her, and took her in his arms, and kissed her mouth and her eyes, and she him again ; and then he sat himself down beside her.

As an example of the beauty of the verse we would take this from the song of the Wood-Sun.

MR. WILLIAM MORRIS'S LAST BOOK

It at least shows how perfectly the poetry harmonises with the prose, and how natural the transition is from the one to the other :

In many a stead Doom dwelleth, nor sleepeth day nor night :
The rim of the bowl she kisseth, and beareth the chambering light
When the kings of men wend happy to the bride-bed from the board.

It is little to say that she wendeth the edge of the grinded sword,
When about the house half builded she hangeth many a day ;
The ship from the strand she shoveth, and on his wonted way
By the mountain hunter fareth where his foot ne'er failed before :
She is where the high bank crumbles at last on the river's shore :
The mower's scythe she whetteth ; and lulleth the shepherd to sleep

Where the deadly ling-worm wakeneth in the desert of the sheep.
Now we that come of the God-kin of her redes for ourselves we wot,

But her will with the lives of men-folk and their ending know we not.

So therefore I bid thee not fear for thyself of Doom and her deed,
But for me : and I bid thee hearken to the helping of my need.
Or else—Art thou happy in life, or lusteth thou to die
In the flower of thy days, when thy glory and thy longing bloom on high ?

The last chapter of the book in which we are told of the great feast made for the dead is so finely written that we cannot refrain from quoting this passage :

Now was the glooming falling upon the earth ; but the Hall was bright within even as the Hall-Sun had promised. Therein was set forth the Treasure of the Wolfings ; fair cloths were hung on the walls, goodly broidered garments on the pillars : goodly brazen cauldrons and fair-carven chests were set down in nooks where men could see them well, and vessels of gold and silver were set all up and down the tables of the feast. The pillars also were wreathed with flowers, and flowers hung garlanded from the walls over the precious hangings ; sweet gums and spices were burning in fair-wrought censers of brass, and so many candles were alight under the

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Roof, that scarce had it looked more ablaze when the Romans had litten the faggots therein for its burning amidst the hurry of the Morning Battle.

There then they fell to feasting, hallowing in the high-tide of their return with victory in their hands; and the dead corpses of Thiodolf and Otter, clad in precious glittering raiment, looked down on them from the High-seat, and the kindreds worshipped them and were glad; and they drank the Cup to them before any others, were they Gods or men.

In days of uncouth realism and unimaginative imitation, it is a high pleasure to welcome work of this kind. It is a work in which all lovers of literature cannot fail to delight.

A Tale of the House of the Wolfings and all the Kindreds of the Mark. Written in Prose and in Verse by William Morris. (Reeves and Turner.)

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 25, 1889.)

A CRITIC recently remarked of Adam Lindsay Gordon that through him Australia had found her first fine utterance in song.¹ This, however, is an amiable error. There is very little of Australia in Gordon's poetry. His heart and mind and fancy were always preoccupied with memories and dreams of England and such culture as England gave him. He owed nothing to the land of his adoption. Had he stayed at home he would have done much better work. In a few poems such as *The Sick Stockrider*, *From the Wreck*, and *Wolf and Hound* there are notes of Australian influences, and these Swinburnian stanzas from the dedication

¹ See *Australian Poets*, page 370.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

to the *Bush Ballads* deserve to be quoted, though the promise they hold out was never fulfilled:

They are rhymes rudely strung with intent less
Of sound than of words,
In lands where bright blossoms are scentless,
And songless bright birds;
Where, with fire and fierce drought on her tresses,
Insatiable summer oppresses
Sere woodlands and sad wildernesses,
And faint flocks and herds.

Whence gather'd?—The locust's grand chirrup
May furnish a stave;
The ring of a rowel and stirrup,
The wash of a wave.
The chaunt of the marsh frog in rushes,
That chimes through the pauses and hushes
Of nightfall, the torrent that gushes,
The tempests that rave.

In the gathering of night gloom o'erhead, in
The still silent change,
All fire-flushed when forest trees red-den
On slopes of the range.
When the gnarl'd, knotted trunks Eucalyptian
Seem carved, like weird columns Egyptian,
With curious device—quaint inscription,
And hieroglyph strange;

In the Spring, when the wattle gold trembles
'Twixt shadow and shine,
When each dew-laden air draught resembles
A long draught of wine;
When the sky-line's blue burnish'd resistance
Makes deeper the dreamiest distance,
Some song in all hearts hath existence,—
Such songs have been mine.

As a rule, however, Gordon is distinctly English, and the landscapes he describes are always the landscapes of our own country. He writes about mediæval lords and ladies in his *Rhyme of Joyous Garde*, about Cavaliers and Roundheads in *The*

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Romance of Britomarte, and *Ashtaroth*, his longest and most ambitious poem, deals with the adventures of the Norman barons and Danish knights of ancient days. Steeped in Swinburne and bewildered with Browning, he set himself to reproduce the marvelous melody of the one and the dramatic vigour and harsh strength of the other. *From the Wreck* is a sort of Australian edition of the *Ride to Ghent*. These are the first three stanzas of one of the so-called *Bush Ballads*:

On skies still and starlit
White lustres take hold,
And grey flashes scarlet,
And red flashes gold.
And sun-glories cover
The rose, shed above her,
Like lover and lover
They flame and unfold.

Still bloom in the garden
Green grass-plot, fresh lawn,
Though pasture lands harden
And drought fissures yawn.
While leaves, not a few fall,
Let rose-leaves for you fall,
Leaves pearl-strung with dewfall,
And gold shot with dawn.

Does the grass-plot remember
The fall of your feet
In Autumn's red ember
When drought leagues with heat,
When the last of the roses
Despairingly closes
In the lull that reposes
Ere storm winds wax fleet?

And the following verses show that the Norman Baron of *Ashtaroth* had read *Dolores* just once too often:

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

Dead priests of Osiris, and Isis,
And Apis! that mystic-l lore,
Like a nightmare, conceived in a crisis
Of fever, is studied no more;
Dead Magian! yon star-troop that spangles
The arch of yon firmament vast
Looks calm, like a host of white angels
On dry dust of votaries past.

On seas unexplored can the ship shun
Sunk rocks? Can man fathom life's links,
Past or future, unsolved by Egyptian
Or Theban, unspoken by Sphinx?
The riddle remains yet, unravell'd
By students consuming night oil.
O earth! we have toil'd, we have travailed:
How long shall we travail and toil?

By the classics Gordon was always very much fascinated. He loved what he calls 'the scroll that is godlike and Greek,' though he is rather uncertain about his quantities, rhyming 'Polyxena' to 'Athena' and 'Aphrodite' to 'light,' and occasionally makes very rash statements, as when he represents Leonidas exclaiming to the three hundred at Thermopylae:

'Ho! comrades let us gaily dine—
This night with *Plato* we shall sup,'

if this be not, as we hope it is, a printer's error. What the Australians liked best were his spirited, if somewhat rough, horse-racing and hunting poems. Indeed, it was not till he found that *How We Beat the Favourite* was on everybody's lips that he consented to forego his anonymity and appear in the unsuspected character of a verse-writer, having up to that time produced his poems shyly, scribbled them on scraps of paper, and sent them unsigned to the local magazines. The fact is that the social atmosphere of Melbourne was not favourable to poets, and the worthy colonials seem to have shared

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Audrey's doubts as to whether poetry was a true and honest thing. It was not till Gordon won the Cup Steeplechase for Major Baker in 1868 that he became really popular, and probably there were many who felt that to steer Babblar to the winning-post was a finer achievement than 'to babble o'er green fields.'

On the whole, it is impossible not to regret that Gordon ever emigrated. His literary power cannot be denied, but it was stunted in uncongenial surroundings and marred by the rude life he was forced to lead. Australia has converted many of our failures into prosperous and admirable mediocrities, but she certainly spoiled one of our poets for us. Ovid at Tomi is not more tragic than Gordon driving cattle or farming an unprofitable sheep-ranch.

That Australia, however, will some day make amends by producing a poet of her own we cannot doubt, and for him there will be new notes to sound and new wonders to tell of. The description, given by Mr. Marcus Clarke in the preface to this volume, of the aspect and spirit of Nature in Australia is most curious and suggestive. The Australian forests, he tells us, are funereal and stern, and 'seem to stifle, in their black gorges, a story of sullen despair.' No leaves fall from the trees, but 'from the melancholy gum strips of white bark hang and rustle. Great grey kangaroos hop noiselessly over the coarse grass. Flights of cockatoos stream out, shrieking like evil souls. The sun suddenly sinks and the mopokes burst out into horrible peals of semi-human laughter.' The aborigines aver that, when night comes, from the bottomless depth of some lagoon a misshapen monster rises, dragging his loathsome length along the ooze. From a corner of the silent

THE POETS' CORNER

forest rises a dismal chant, and around a fire dance natives painted like skeletons. All is fear-inspiring and gloomy. No bright fancies are linked with the memories of the mountains. Hopeless explorers have named them out of their sufferings—Mount Misery, Mount Dreadful, Mount Despair.

In Australia alone (says Mr. Clarke) is to be found the Grotesque, the Weird, the strange scribblings of nature learning how to write. But the dweller in the wilderness acknowledges the subtle charm of the fantastic land of monstrosities. He becomes familiar with the beauty of loneliness. Whispered to by the myriad tongues of the wilderness, he learns the language of the barren and the uncouth, and can read the hieroglyphs of haggard gum-trees, blown into odd shapes, distorted with fierce hot winds, or cramped with cold nights, when the Southern Cross freezes in a cloudless sky of icy blue. The phantasmagoria of that wild dream-land termed the Bush interprets itself, and the Poet of our desolation begins to comprehend why free Esau loved his heritage of desert sand better than all the bountiful richness of Egypt.

Here, certainly, is new material for the poet, here is a land that is waiting for its singer. Such a singer Gordon was not. He remained thoroughly English, and the best that we can say of him is that he wrote imperfectly in Australia those poems that in England he might have made perfect.

Poems. By Adam Lindsay Gordon. (Samuel Mullen.)

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IX

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 30, 1889.)

JUDGES, like the criminal classes, have their lighter moments, and it was probably in one of his happiest and, certainly, in one of his most careless moods that Mr. Justice Denman conceived

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the idea of putting the early history of Rome into doggerel verse for the benefit of a little boy of the name of Jack. Poor Jack! He is still, we learn from the preface, under six years of age, and it is sad to think of the future career of a boy who is being brought up on bad history and worse poetry. Here is a passage from the learned judge's account of Romulus:

Poor Tatius by some unknown hand
Was soon assassinated,
Some said by Romulus' command;
I know not—but 'twas fated.

Sole King again, this Romulus
Play'd some fantastic tricks,
Lictors he had, who hatchets bore
Bound up with rods of sticks.

He treated all who thwarted him
No better than a dog,
Sometimes 'twas ' Heads off, Lictors, there!
Sometimes ' Ho! Lictors, flog!'

Then he created Senators,
And gave them rings of gold;
Old soldiers all; their name deriv'd
From ' Senex ' which means ' old.'

Knights, too, he made, good horsemen all,
Who always were at hand
To execute immediately
Whate'er he might command.

But these were of Patrician rank,
Plebeians all the rest;
Remember this distinction, Jack!
For 'tis a useful test.

The reign of Tullius Hostilius opens with a very wicked rhyme:

As Numa, dying, only left
A daughter, named Pompilia,
The Senate had to choose a King.
They choose one sadly *sillier*.

THE POETS' CORNER

If Jack goes to the bar, Mr. Justice De manian will have much to answer for.

After such a terrible example from the Bench, it is pleasant to turn to the seats reserved for Queen's Counsel. Mr. Cooper Willis's *Tales and Legends*, if somewhat boisterous in manner, is still very spirited and clever. *The Prison of the Danes* is not at all a bad poem, and there is a great deal of eloquent, strong writing in the passage beginning:

The dying star song of the night sinks in the dawning day,
And the dark-blue sheen is changed to green, and the green fades
into grey,

And the sleepers are roused from their slumbers, and at last the
Danesmen know

How few of all their numbers are left them by the foe.

Not much can be said of a poet who exclaims:

Oh, for the power of Byron or of Moore,
To glow with one, and with the latter soar.

And yet Mr. Moodie is one of the best of those South African poets whose works have been collected and arranged by Mr. Wilmot. Pringle, the 'father of South African verse,' comes first, of course, and his best poem is, undoubtedly, *Afar in the Desert*:

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
Away, away, from the dwelling of men
By the wild-deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen:
By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
Where thegnu, the gazelle and the hartebeest graze,
And the kudu and eland unhunted recline
By the skirts of grey forests o'erhung with wild vine,
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood,
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will
In the fen where the wild ass is drinking his fill.

It is not, however, a very remarkable production.

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The Smouse, by Fannin, has the modern merit of incomprehensibility. It reads like something out of *The Hunting of the Snark*:

I'm a Smouse, I'm a Smouse in the wilderness wide,
The veld is my home, and the wagon's my pride:
The crack of my 'voerslag' shall sound o'er the lea,
I'm a Smouse, I'm a Smouse, and the trader is free!
I heed not the Governor, I fear not his law,
I care not for civilisation one straw,
And ne'er to 'Ompanda'—'Umgazis' I'll throw
While my arm carries fist, or my foot bears a toe!
'Trek,' 'trek,' ply the whip—touch the fore oxen's skin,
I'll warrant we'll 'go it' through thick and through thin—
Loop! loop ye oud skellums! ot Vikmaan trek jy;
I'm a Smouse, I'm a Smouse, and the trader is free!

The South African poets, as a class, are rather behind the age. They seem to think that 'Aurora' is a very novel and delightful epithet for the dawn. On the whole they depress us.

Chess, by Mr. Louis Tylor, is a sort of Christmas masque in which the *dramatis personæ* consist of some unmusical carollers, a priggish young man called Eric, and the chessmen off the board. The White Queen's Knight begins a ballad and the Black King's Bishop completes it. The Pawns sing in chorus and the Castles converse with each other. The silliness of the form makes it an absolutely unreadable book.

Mr. Williamson's *Poems of Nature and Life* are as orthodox in spirit as they are commonplace in form. A few harmless heresies of art and thought would do this poet no harm. Nearly everything that he says has been said before and said better. The only original thing in the volume is the description of Mr. Robert Buchanan's 'grandeur of mind.' This is decidedly new.

Dr. Cockle tells us that Müllner's *Guilt* and *The*

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Ancestress of Grillparzer are the masterpieces of German fate-tragedy. His translation of the first of these two masterpieces does not make us long for any further acquaintance with the school. Here is a specimen from the fourth act of the fate-tragedy.

SCENE VIII.

ELVIRA.

HUGO.

ELVIRA (*after long silence, leaving the harp, steps to Hugo, and seeks his gaze*).

HUGO (*softly*). Though I made sacrifice of thy sweet life. The Father has forgiven. Can the wife—Forgive?

ELVIRA (*on his breast*). She can!

HUGO (*with all the warmth of love*). Dear wife!

ELVIRA (*after a pause, in deep sorrow*). Must it be so, beloved one?

HUGO (*sorry to have betrayed himself*). What?

In his preface to *The Circle of Seasons*, a series of hymns and verses for the seasons of the Church, the Rev. T. B. Dover expresses a hope that this well-meaning if somewhat tedious book 'may be of value to those many earnest people to whom the subjective aspect of truth is helpful.' The poem beginning

Lord, in the inn of my poor worthless heart

Guests come and go; but there is room for Thee,

has some merit and might be converted into a good sonnet. The majority of the poems, however, are quite worthless. There seems to be some curious connection between piety and poor rhymes.

Lord Henry Somerset's verse is not so good as his music. Most of the *Songs of Adieu* are marred by their excessive sentimentality of feeling and by the commonplace character of their weak and lax form. There is nothing that is new and little that is true in verse of this kind:

The golden leaves are falling,
Falling one by one,

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Their tender 'Adieux' calling
To the cold autumnal sun.
The trees in the keen and frosty air
Stand out against the sky,
'Twould seem they stretch their branches bare
To Heaven in agony.

It can be produced in any quantity. Lord Henry Somerset has too much heart and too little art to make a good poet, and such art as he does possess is devoid of almost every intellectual quality and entirely lacking in any intellectual strength. He has nothing to say and says it.

Mrs. Cora M. Davis is eloquent about the splendours of what the authoress of *The Circle of Seasons* calls 'this earthly ball.'

Let's sing the beauties of this grand old earth,
she cries, and proceeds to tell how

Imagination paints old Egypt's former glory,
Of mighty temples reaching heavenward,
Of grim, colossal statues, whose barbaric story
The caustic pens of erudition still record,
Whose ancient cities of glittering minarets
Reflect the gold of Afric's gorgeous sunsets.

'The caustic pens of erudition' is quite delightful and will be appreciated by all Egyptologists. There is also a charming passage in the same poem on the pictures of the Old Masters:

the mellow richness of whose tints impart,
By contrast, greater delicacy still to modern art.

This seems to us the highest form of optimism we have ever come across in art criticism. It is American in origin, Mrs. Davis, as her biographer tells us, having been born in Alabama, Genesee co., N.Y.

(1) *The Story of the Kings of Rome in Verse*. By the Hon. G. Denman, Judge of the High Court of Justice. (Trübner and Co.)

(2) *Tales and Legends in Verse*. By E. Cooper Willis, Q.C. (Kegan Paul.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES

- (3) *The Poetry of South Africa*. Collected and arranged by A. Wilmot. (Sampson Low and Co.)
 (4) *Chess*. A Christmas Masque. By Louis Tylor. (Fisher Unwin.)
 (5) *Poems of Nature and Life*. By David R. Williamson. (Blackwood.)
 (6) *Guilt*. Translated from the German by J. Cockle, M.D. (Williams and Norgate.)
 (7) *The Circle of Seasons*. By K. E. V. (Elliot Stock.)
 (8) *Songs of Adieu*. By Lord Henry Somerset. (Chatto and Windus.)
 (9) *Immortelles*. By Cora M. Davis. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES

IV

(*Woman's World*, April 1889.)

IN modern life,' said Matthew Arnold once, 'you cannot well enter a monastery; but you can enter the Wordsworth Society.' I fear that this will sound to many a somewhat uninviting description of this admirable and useful body, whose papers and productions have been recently published by Professor Knight, under the title of *Wordsworthiana*. 'Plain living and high thinking' are not popular ideals. Most people prefer to live in luxury, and to think with the majority. However, there is really nothing in the essays and addresses of the Wordsworth Society that need cause the public any unnecessary alarm; and it is gratifying to note that, although the society is still in the first blush of enthusiasm, it has not yet insisted upon our admiring Wordsworth's inferior work. It praises what is worthy of praise, reverences what should be revered, and explains what does not require explanation. One paper is quite delightful; it is from the pen of Mr. Rawnsley, and deals with such reminiscences of Wordsworth as

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still linger among the peasantry of Westmoreland. Mr. Rawnsley grew up, he tells us, in the immediate vicinity of the present Poet-Laureate's old home in Lincolnshire, and had been struck with the swiftness with which,

As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,

the memories of the poet of the Somersby Wold had 'faded from off the circle of the hills'—had, indeed, been astonished to note how little real interest was taken in him or his fame, and how seldom his works were met with in the houses of the rich or poor in the very neighbourhood. Accordingly, when he came to reside in the Lake Country, he endeavoured to find out what of Wordsworth's memory among the men of the Dales still lingered on—how far he was still a moving presence among them—how far his works had made their way into the cottages and farmhouses of the valleys. He also tried to discover how far the race of Westmoreland and Cumberland farm-folk—the 'Matthews' and the 'Michaels' of the poet, as described by him—were real or fancy pictures, or how far the characters of the Dalesmen had been altered in any remarkable manner by tourist influences during the thirty-two years that have passed since the Lake poet was laid to rest.

With regard to the latter point, it will be remembered that Mr. Ruskin, writing in 1876, said that 'the Border peasantry, painted with absolute fidelity by Scott and Wordsworth,' are, as hitherto, a scarcely injured race; that in his fields at Coniston he had men who might have fought with Henry v. at Agincourt without being distinguished from any of his knights; that he could take his tradesmen's

SOME LITERARY NOTES

word for a thousand pounds, and need never latch his garden gate; and that he did not fear molestation, in wood or on moor, for his girl guests. Mr. Rawnsley, however, found that a certain beauty had vanished which the simple retirement of old valley days fifty years ago gave to the men among whom Wordsworth lived. 'The strangers,' he says, 'with their gifts of gold, their vulgarity, and their requirements, have much to answer for.' As for their impressions of Wordsworth, to understand them one must understand the vernacular of the Lake District. 'What was Mr. Wordsworth like in personal appearance?' said Mr. Rawnsley once to an old retainer, who still lives not far from Rydal Mount. 'He was a ugly-faaced man, and a mean liver,' was the answer; but all that was really meant was that he was a man of marked features, and led a very simple life in matters of food and raiment. Another old man, who believed that Wordsworth 'got most of his poetry out of Hartley,' spoke of the poet's wife as 'a very onpleasant woman, very onpleasant indeed. A close-fisted woman, that's what she was.' This, however, seems to have been merely a tribute to Mrs. Wordsworth's admirable house-keeping qualities.

The first person interviewed by Mr. Rawnsley was an old lady who had been once in service at Rydal Mount, and was, in 1870, a lodging-house keeper at Grasmere. She was not a very imaginative person, as may be gathered from the following anecdote:—Mr. Rawnsley's sister came in from a late evening walk, and said, 'O Mrs. D——, have you seen the wonderful sunset?' The good lady turned sharply round and, drawing herself to her full height, as if mortally offended, answered.

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'No, miss; I'm a tidy cook, I know, and "they say" a decentish body for a landlady, but I don't know nothing about sunsets or them sort of things, they've never been in my line.' Her reminiscence of Wordsworth was as worthy of tradition as it was explanatory, from her point of view, of the method in which Wordsworth composed, and was helped in his labours by his enthusiastic sister. 'Well, you know,' she said, 'Mr. Wordsworth went humming and boing about, and she, Miss Dorothy, kept close behind him, and she picked up the bits as he let 'em fall, and tak' 'em down, and put 'em together on paper for him. And you may be very well sure as how she didn't understand nor make sense out of 'em, and I doubt that he didn't know much about them either himself, but, howivver, there's a great many folk as do, I dare say.' Of Wordsworth's habit of talking to himself, and composing aloud, we hear a great deal. 'Was Mr. Wordsworth a sociable man?' asked Mr. Rawnsley of a Rydal farmer. 'Wudsworth, for a' he had noa pride nor nowt,' was the answer, 'was a man who was quite one to hissel, ye kna. He was not a man as folks could crack wi', nor not a man as could crack wi' folks. But there was another thing as kep' folk off, he had a ter'ble girt deep voice, and ye might see his faace agaan for long enuff. I've knoan folks, village lads and lasses, coming over by old road above, which runs from Grasmere to Rydal, flayt a'most to death there by Wishing Gaate to hear the girt voice a groanin' and mutterin' and thunderin' of a still evening. And he had a way of standin' quite still by the rock there in t' path under Rydal, and folks could hear sounds like a wild beast coming from the rocks, and childer were scared fit to be deäd a'most.'

SOME LITERARY NOTES

Wordsworth's description of himself constantly recurs to one:

And who is he with modest looks,
And clad in sober russet gown?
He murmurs by the running brooks,
A music sweeter than their own;
He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove.

But the corroboration comes in strange guise. Mr. Rawnsley asked one of the Dalesmen about Wordsworth's dress and habits. This was the reply: 'Wudsworth wore a Jem Crow, never seed him in a boxer in my life,—a Jem Crow and an old blue cloak was his rig, and *as for his habits, he had noan*; niver knew him with a pot i' his hand, or a pipe i' his mouth. But he was a greät skater, for a' that —noan better in these parts—why, he could cut his own naime upo' the ice, could Mr. Wudsworth.' Skating seems to have been Wordsworth's one form of amusement. He was 'over feckless i' his hands' —could not drive or ride—'not a bit of fish in him,' and 'nowt of a mountaineer.' But he could skate. The rapture of the time when, as a boy, on Esthwaite's frozen lake, he had

wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home, and, shod with steel,
Had hissed along the polished ice,

was continued, Mr. Rawnsley tells us, into manhood's later day; and Mr. Rawnsley found many proofs that the skill the poet had gained, when

Not seldom from the uproar he retired,
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng
To cut across the reflex of a star,

was of such a kind as to astonish the natives among

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whom he dwelt. The recollection of a fall he once had, when his skate caught on a stone, still lingers in the district. A boy had been sent to sweep the snow from the White Moss Tarn for him. 'Did Mr. Wudsworth gie ye owt?' he was asked, when he returned from his labour. 'Na, but I seed him tumble, though!' was the answer. 'He was a ter'ble girt skater, was Wudsworth now,' says one of Mr. Rawnsley's informants; 'he would put one hand i' his breast (he wore a frill shirt i' them days), and t'other hand i' his wäistband, same as shepherds does to keep their hands warm, and he would stand up straight and sway and swing away grandly.'

Of his poetry they did not think much, and whatever was good in it they ascribed to his wife, his sister, and Hartley Coleridge. He wrote poetry, they said, 'because he couldn't help it—because it was his hobby'—for sheer love, and not for money. They could not understand his doing work 'for nowt,' and held his occupation in somewhat light esteem because it did not bring in 'a deal o' brass to the pocket.' 'Did you ever read his poetry, or see any books about in the farmhouses?' asked Mr. Rawnsley. The answer was curious: 'Ay, ay, time or two. But ya're weel aware there's potry and potry. There's potry wi' a li'le bit pleasant in it, and potry sic as a man can laugh at or the childer understand, and some as takes a deal of mastery to make out what's said, and a deal of Wudsworth's was this sort, ye kna. You could tell fra the man's faace his potry would niver have no laugh in it. His potry was quite different work from li'le Hartley. Hartley 'ud goa running along beside o' the brooks and mak his, and goa in the first oppen door and write what he had got upo'

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paper. But Wudsworth's poetry was real hard stuff, and bided a deal of making, and he'd keep it in his head for long enough. Eh, but it's queer, mon, different ways folks hes of making poetry now. . . . Not but what Mr. Wudsworth didn't stand very high, and was a well-spoken man enough.' The best criticism on Wordsworth that Mr. Rawnsley heard was this: 'He was an open-air man, and a great critic of trees.'

There are many useful and well-written essays in Professor Knight's volume, but Mr. Rawnsley's is far the most interesting of all. It gives us a graphic picture of the poet as he appeared in outward semblance and manner to those about whom he wrote.

Mary Myles is Mrs. Edmonds's first attempt at writing fiction. Mrs. Edmonds is well known as an authority on modern Greek literature, and her style has often a very pleasant literary flavour, though in her dialogues she has not as yet quite grasped the difference between *la langue parlée* and *la langue écrite*. Her heroine is a sort of Nausicaa from Girton, who develops into the Pallas Athena of a provincial school. She has her love-romance, like her Homeric prototype, and her Odysseus returns to her at the close of the book. It is a nice story.

Lady Dilke's *Art in the Modern State* is a book that cannot fail to interest deeply every one who cares either for art or for history. The 'modern State' which gives its title to the book is that political and social organisation of our day that comes to us from the France of Richelieu and Colbert, and is the direct outcome of the 'Grand Siècle,' the true greatness of which century, as Lady Dilke points out, consists not in its vain wars, and formal

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stage and stilted eloquence, and pompous palaces, but in the formation and working out of the political and social system of which these things were the first-fruits. To the question that naturally rises on one's lips, 'How can one dwell on the art of the seventeenth century?—it has no charm,' Lady Dilke answers that this art presents in its organisation, from the point of view of social polity, problems of the highest intellectual interest. Throughout all its phases—to quote her own words—'the life of France wears, during the seventeenth century, a political aspect. The explanation of all changes in the social system, in letters, in the arts, in fashions even, has to be sought in the necessities of the political position; and the seeming caprices of taste take their rise from the same causes which went to determine the making of a treaty or the promulgation of an edict. This seems all the stranger because, in times preceding, letters and the arts, at least, appeared to flourish in conditions as far removed from the action of statecraft as if they had been a growth of fairyland. In the Middle Ages they were devoted to a virgin image of Virtue; they framed, in the shade of the sanctuary, an ideal shining with the beauty born of self-renunciation, of resignation to self-enforced conditions of moral and physical suffering. By the queenly Venus of the Renaissance they were consecrated to the joys of life, and the world saw that through their perfect use men might renew their strength, and behold virtue and beauty with clear eyes. It was, however, reserved for the rulers of France in the seventeenth century fully to realise the political function of letters and the arts in the modern State, and their immense importance in connection with the prosperity of a commercial nation.'

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The whole subject is certainly extremely fascinating. The Renaissance had for its object the development of great personalities. The perfect freedom of the temperament in matters of art, the perfect freedom of the intellect in intellectual matters, the full development of the individual, were the things it aimed at. As we study its history we find it full of great anarchies. It solved no political or social problems; it did not seek to solve them. The ideal of the 'Grand Siècle,' and of Richelieu, in whom the forces of that great age were incarnate, was different. The ideas of citizenship, of the building up of a great nation, of the centralisation of forces, of collective action, of ethnic unity of purpose, came before the world. It was inevitable that they should have done so, and Lady Dilke, with her keen historic sense and her wonderful power of grouping facts, has told us the story of their struggle and their victory. Her book is, from every point of view, a most remarkable work. Her style is almost French in its clearness, its sobriety, its fine and, at times, ascetic simplicity. The whole ground-plan and intellectual conception is admirable.

It is, of course, easy to see how much Art lost by having a new mission forced upon her. The creation of a formal tradition upon classical lines is never without its danger, and it is sad to find the provincial towns of France, once so varied and individual in artistic expression, writing to Paris for designs and advice. And yet, through Colbert's great centralising scheme of State supervisor and State aid, France was the one country in Europe, and has remained the one country in Europe, where the arts are not divorced from industry. The Academy of Painting and Sculpture and the School of Architecture

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were not, to quote Lady Dilke's words, called into being in order that royal palaces should be raised surpassing all others in magnificence :

Bièvrebache and the Savonnerie were not established only that such palaces should be furnished more sumptuously than those of an Eastern fairy-tale. Colbert did not care chiefly to inquire, when organising art administration, what were the institutions best fitted to foster the proper interests of art ; he asked, in the first place, what would most contribute to swell the national importance. Even so, in surrounding the King with the treasures of luxury, his object was twofold—their possession should, indeed, illustrate the Crown, but should also be a unique source of advantage to the people. Glass-workers were brought from Venice, and lace-makers from Flanders, that they might yield to France the secrets of their skill. Palaces and public buildings were to afford commissions for French artists, and a means of technical and artistic education for all those employed upon them. The royal collections were but a further instrument in educating the taste and increasing the knowledge of the working classes. The costly factories of the Savonnerie and the Gobelins were practical schools, in which every detail of every branch of all those industries which contribute to the furnishing and decoration of houses were brought to perfection ; whilst a band of chosen apprentices were trained in the adjoining schools. To Colbert is due the honour of having foreseen, not only that the interests of the modern State were inseparably bound up with those of industry, but also that the interests of industry could not, without prejudice, be divorced from art.

Mr. Bret Harte has never written anything finer than *Cressy*. It is one of his most brilliant and masterly productions, and will take rank with the best of his Californian stories. Hawthorne re-created for us the America of the past with the incomparable grace of a very perfect artist, but Mr. Bret Harte's emphasised modernity has, in its own sphere, won equal, or almost equal, triumphs. Wit, pathos, humour, realism, exaggeration, and romance are in

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this marvellous story all blended together, and out of the very clash and chaos of these things comes life itself. And what a curious life it is, half civilised and half barbarous, naïve and corrupt, chivalrous and commonplace, real and improbable! Cressy herself is the most tantalising of heroines. She is always eluding one's grasp. It is difficult to say whether she sacrifices herself on the altar of romance, or is merely a girl with an extraordinary sense of humour. She is intangible, and the more we know of her, the more incomprehensible she becomes. It is pleasant to come across a heroine who is not identified with any great cause, and represents no important principle, but is simply a wonderful nymph from American backwoods, who has in her something of Artemis, and not a little of Aphrodite.

It is always a pleasure to come across an American poet who is not national, and who tries to give expression to the literature that he loves rather than to the land in which he lives. The Muses care so little for geography! Mr. Richard Day's *Poems* have nothing distinctively American about them. Here and there in his verse one comes across a flower that does not bloom in our meadows, a bird to which our woodlands have never listened. But the spirit that animates the verse is simple and human, and there is hardly a poem in the volume that English lips might not have uttered. *Sounds of the Temple* has much in it that is interesting in metre as well as in matter:—

Then sighed a poet from his soul:

'The clouds are blown across the stars,

And chill have grown my lattice bars;

I cannot keep my vigil whole

By the lone candle of my soul.

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'This reed had once devoutest tongue,
And sang as if to its small throat
God listened for a perfect note ;
As charily this lyre was strung :
God's praise is slow and has no tongue.'

But the best poem is undoubtedly the *Hymn to the Mountain* :—

'Within the hollow of thy hand—
This wooded dell half up the height,
Where streams take breath midway in flight—
Here let me stand.

Here warbles not a lowland bird,
Here are no babbling tongues of men ;
Thy rivers rustling through the glen
Alone are heard.

Above no pinion cleaves its way,
Save when the eagle's wing, as now,
With sweep imperial shades thy brow
Beetling and grey.

What thoughts are thine, majestic peak ?
And moods that were not born to chime
With poets' ineffectual rhyme
And numbers weak ?

The green earth spreads thy gaze before,
And the unfailing skies are brought
Within the level of thy thought.
There is no more.

The stars salute thy rugged crown
With syllables of twinkling fire ;
Like choral burst from distant choir,
Their psalm rolls down.

And I within this temple niche,
Like statue set where prophets talk,
Catch strains they murmur as they walk,
And I am rich.

Miss Ella Curtis's *A Game of Chance* is certainly the best novel that this clever young writer has as

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yet produced. If it has a fault, it is that it is crowded with too much incident, and often surrenders the study of character to the development of plot. Indeed, it has many plots, each of which, in more economical hands, would have served as the basis of a complete story. We have as the central incident the career of a clever lady's-maid who personifies her mistress, and is welcomed by Sir John Erskine, an English country gentleman, as the widow of his dead son. The real husband of the adventuress tracks his wife to England, and claims her. She pretends that he is insane, and has him removed. Then he tries to murder her, and when she recovers, she finds her beauty gone and her secret discovered. There is quite enough sensation here to interest even the jaded City man, who is said to have grown quite critical of late on the subject of what is really a thrilling plot. But Miss Curtis is not satisfied. The lady's-maid has an extremely handsome brother, who is a wonderful musician, and has a divine tenor voice. With him the stately Lady Judith falls wildly in love, and this part of the story is treated with a great deal of subtlety and clever analysis. However, Lady Judith does not marry her rustic Orpheus, so the social *convenances* are undisturbed. The romance of the Rector of the Parish, who falls in love with a charming school-teacher, is a good deal overshadowed by Lady Judith's story, but it is pleasantly told. A more important episode is the marriage between the daughter of the Tory squire and the Radical candidate for the borough. They separate on their wedding-day, and are not reconciled till the third volume. No one could say that Miss Curtis's book is dull. In fact, her style is very bright and amusing. It is impossible, perhaps, not

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to be a little bewildered by the amount of characters, and by the crowded incidents; but, on the whole, the scheme of the construction is clear, and certainly the decoration is admirable.

- (1) *Wordsworthiana: A Selection from Papers read to the Wordsworth Society.* Edited by William Knight. (Macmillan and Co.)
- (2) *Mary Myles.* By E. M. Edmonds. (Remington and Co.)
- (3) *Art in the Modern State.* By Lady Dilke. (Chapman and Hall.)
- (4) *Cressy.* By Bret Harte. (Macmillan and Co.)
- (5) *Poems.* By Richard Day. (New York: Cassell and Co.)
- (6) *A Game of Chance.* By Ella Curtis. (Hurst and Blackett.)

MR. FROUDE'S BLUE-BOOK

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 13, 1889.)

BLUE-BOOKS are generally dull reading, but Blue-books on Ireland have always been interesting. They form the record of one of the great tragedies of modern Europe. In them England has written down her indictment against her self and has given to the world the history of her shame. If in the last century she tried to govern Ireland with an insolence that was intensified by race hatred and religious prejudice, she has sought to rule her in this century with a stupidity that is aggravated by good intentions. The last of these Blue-books, Mr. Froude's heavy novel, has appeared, however, somewhat too late. The society that he describes has long since passed away. An entirely new factor has appeared in the social development of the country, and this factor is the Irish-American and his influence. To mature its powers, to concentrate its actions, to learn the secret of its own strength and of England's weakness, the Celtic intellect has had to cross the

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Atlantic. At home it had but learned the pathetic weakness of nationality; in a strange land it realised what indomitable forces nationality possesses. What captivity was to the Jews, exile has been to the Irish. America and American influence has educated them. Their first practical leader is an Irish-American.

But while Mr. Froude's book has no practical relation to modern Irish politics, and does not offer any solution of the present question, it has a certain historical value. It is a vivid picture of Ireland in the latter half of the eighteenth century, a picture often false in its lights and exaggerated in its shadows, but a picture none the less. Mr. Froude admits the martyrdom of Ireland but regrets that the martyrdom was not more completely carried out. His ground of complaint against the Executioner is not his trade but his bungling. It is the bluntness not the cruelty of the sword that he objects to. Resolute government, that shallow shibboleth of those who do not understand how complex a thing the art of government is, is his posthumous panacea for past evils. His hero, Colonel Goring, has the words Law and Order ever on his lips, meaning by the one the enforcement of unjust legislation, and implying by the other the suppression of every fine national aspiration. That the government should enforce iniquity and the governed submit to it, seems to Mr. Froude, as it certainly is to many others, the true ideal of political science. Like most penmen he overrates the power of the sword. Where England has had to struggle she has been wise. Where physical strength has been on her side, as in Ireland, she has been made unwieldy by that strength. Her own

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strong hands have blinded her. She has had force but no direction.

There is, of course, a story in Mr. Froude's novel. It is not simply a political disquisition. The interest of the tale, such as it is, centres round two men, Colonel Goring and Morty Sullivan, the Cromwellian and the Celt. These men are enemies by race and creed and feeling. The first represents Mr. Froude's cure for Ireland. He is a resolute Englishman, with strong Nonconformist tendencies, who plants an industrial colony on the coast of Kerry, and has deep-rooted objections to that illicit trade with France which in the last century was the sole method by which the Irish people were enabled to pay their rents to their absentee landlords. Colonel Goring bitterly regrets that the Penal Laws against the Catholics are not rigorously carried out. He is a '*Police at any price*' man.

'And this,' said Goring scornfully, 'is what you call governing Ireland, hanging up your law like a scarecrow in the garden till every sparrow has learnt to make a jest of it. Your Popery Acts! Well, you borrowed them from France. The French Catholics did not choose to keep the Hugonots among them, and recalled the Edict of Nantes. As they treated the Hugonots, so you said to all the world that you would treat the Papists. You borrowed from the French the very language of your Statute, but they are not afraid to stand by their law, and you are afraid to stand by yours. You let the people laugh at it, and in teaching them to despise one law, you teach them to despise all laws—God's and man's alike. I cannot say how it will end; but I can tell you this, that you are training up a race with the education which you are giving them that will astonish mankind by and bye.'

Mr. Froude's résumé of the history of Ireland is not without power though it is far from being really accurate. 'The Irish,' he tells us, 'had dis-

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owned the facts of life, and the facts of life had proved the strongest.' The English, unable to tolerate anarchy so near their shores, 'consulted the Pope. The Pope gave them leave to interfere, and the Pope had the best of the bargain. For the English brought him in, and the Irish . . . kept him there.' England's first settlers were Norman nobles. They became more Irish than the Irish, and England found herself in this difficulty: 'To abandon Ireland would be discreditable, to rule it as a province would be contrary to English traditions.' She then 'tried to rule by dividing,' and failed. The Pope was too strong for her. At last she made her great political discovery. What Ireland wanted was evidently an entirely new population 'of the same race and the same religion as her own.' The new policy was partly carried out:

Elizabeth first and then James and then Cromwell replanted the Island, introducing English, Scots, Hugonots, Flemings, Dutch, tens of thousands of families of vigorous and earnest Protestants, who brought their industries along with them. Twice the Irish . . . tried . . . to drive out this new element. . . . They failed. . . . [But] England . . . had no sooner accomplished her long task than she set herself to work to spoil it again. She destroyed the industries of her co'ists by her trade laws. She set the Bishops to rob them of their religion. . . . [As for the gentry,] The purpose for which they had been introduced into Ireland was unfulfilled. They were but alien intruders, who did nothing, who were allowed to do nothing. The time would come when an exasperated population would demand that the land should be given back to them, and England would then, perhaps, throw the gentry to the wolves, in the hope of a momentary peace. But her own turn would follow. She would be face to face with the old problem, either to make a new conquest or to retire with disgrace.

Political disquisitions of this kind, and prophecies

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after the event, are found all through Mr. Froude's book, and on almost every second page we come across aphorisms on the Irish character, on the teachings of Irish history and on the nature of England's mode of government. Some of them represent Mr. Froude's own views, others are entirely dramatic and introduced for the purpose of characterisation. We append some specimens. As epigrams they are not very felicitous, but they are interesting from some points of view.

Irish Society grew up in happy recklessness. Insecurity added zest to enjoyment.

We Irish must either laugh or cry, and if we went in for crying, we should all hang ourselves.

Too close a union with the Irish had produced degeneracy both of character and creed in all the settlements of English.

We age quickly in Ireland with the whiskey and the broken heads.

The Irish leaders cannot fight. They can make the country ungovernable, and keep an English army occupied in watching them.

No nation can ever achieve a liberty that will not be a curse to them, except by arms in the field.

[The Irish] are taught from their cradles that English rule is the cause of all their miseries. They were as ill off under their own chiefs; but they would bear from their natural leaders what they will not bear from us, and if we have not made their lot more wretched we have not made it any better.

'Patriotism? Yes! Patriotism of the Hibernian order. The country has been badly treated, and is poor and miserable. This is the patriot's stock in trade. Does he want it mended? Not he. His own occupation would be gone.'

Irish corruption is the twin-brother of Irish eloquence.

England will not let us break the heads of our scoundrels; she will not break them herself; we are a free country, and must take the consequences.

The functions of the Anglo-Irish Government were to do

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what ought not to be done, and to leave undone what ought to be done.

The Irish race have always been noisy, useless and ineffectual. They have produced nothing, they have done nothing, which it is possible to admire. What they are, that they have always been, and the only hope for them is that their ridiculous Irish nationality should be buried and forgotten.

The Irish are the best actors in the world.

Order is an exotic in Ireland. It has been imported from England, but it will not grow. It suits neither soil, nor climate. If the English wanted order in Ireland, they should have left none of us alive.

When ruling powers are unjust, nature reasserts her rights. Even anarchy has its advantages.

Nature keeps an accurate account. . . . The longer a bill is left unpaid, the heavier the accumulation of interest.

You cannot live in Ireland without breaking laws on one side or another. *Pecca fortiter*, therefore, as . . . Luther said.

The animal spirits of the Irish remained when all else was gone, and if there was no purpose in their lives, they could at least enjoy themselves.

The Irish peasants can make the country hot for the Protestant gentleman, but that is all they are fit for.

As we said before, if Mr. Froude intended his book to help the Tory Government to solve the Irish question he has entirely missed his aim. The Ireland of which he writes has disappeared. As a record, however, of the incapacity of a Teutonic to rule a Celtic people against their own wish, his book is not without value. It is dull, but dull books are very popular at present; and as people have grown a little tired of talking about *Robert Elsmere*, they will probably take to discussing *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy*. There are some who will welcome with delight the idea of solving the Irish question by doing away with the Irish people. There are others who will remember that Ireland

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has extended her boundaries, and that we have now to reckon with her not merely in the Old World but in the New.

The Two Chiefs of Dunboy: or An Irish Romance of the Last Century. By J. A. Froude. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES

V

(*Woman's World*, May 1889.)

MISS CAROLINE FITZ GERALD'S volume of poems, *Venetia Victrix*, is dedicated to Mr. Robert Browning, and in the poem that gives its title to the book it is not difficult to see traces of Mr. Browning's influence. *Venetia Victrix* is a powerful psychological study of a man's soul, a vivid presentation of a terrible, fiery-coloured moment in a marred and incomplete life. It is sometimes complex and intricate in expression, but then the subject itself is intricate and complex. Plastic simplicity of outline may render for us the visible aspect of life; it is different when we come to deal with those secrets which self-consciousness alone contains, and which self-consciousness itself can but half reveal. Action takes place in the sunlight, but the soul works in the dark.

There is something curiously interesting in the marked tendency of modern poetry to become obscure. Many critics, writing with their eyes fixed on the masterpieces of past literature, have ascribed this tendency to wilfulness and to affectation. Its origin is rather to be found in the complexity of the new problems, and in the fact that self-consciousness is not yet adequate to explain the contents of the Ego. In Mr. Browning's poems,

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as in life itself which has suggested, or rather necessitated, the new method, thought seems to proceed not on logical lines, but on lines of passion. The unity of the individual is being expressed through its inconsistencies and its contradictions. In a strange twilight man is seeking for himself, and when he has found his own image, he cannot understand it. Objective forms of art, such as sculpture and the drama, sufficed one for the perfect presentation of life; they can no longer so suffice.

The central motive of Miss Caroline Fitz Gerald's psychological poem is the study of a man who to do a noble action wrecks his own soul, sells it to evil, and to the spirit of evil. Many martyrs have for a great cause sacrificed their physical life; the sacrifice of the spiritual life has a more poignant and a more tragic note. The story is supposed to be told by a French doctor, sitting at his window in Paris one evening:

How far off Venice seems to-night! How dim
The still-remembered sunsets, with the rim
Of gold round the stone haloes, where they stand,
Those carven saints, and look towards the land,
Right Westward, perched on high, with palm in hand,
Completing the peaked church-front. Oh how clear
And dark against the evening splendour! Steer
Between the graveyard island and the quay,
Where North-winds dash the spray on Venice;—see
The rosy light behind dark dome and tower,
Or gaunt smoke-laden chimney;—mark the power
Of Nature's gentleness, in rise or fall
Of interlinked beauty, to recall
Earth's majesty in desecration's place,
Lending yon grimy pile that dream-like face
Of evening beauty;—note yon rugged cloud,
Red-rimmed and heavy, drooping like a shroud
Over Murano in the dying day.
I see it now as then—so far away!

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The face of a boy in the street catches his eye.
He seems to see in it some likeness to a dead
friend. He begins to think, and at last remembers
a hospital ward in Venice :

'Twas an April day,
The year Napoleon's troops took Venice—say
The twenty-fifth of April. All alone
Walking the ward, I heard a sick man moan,
In tones so piteous, as his heart would break :
'Lost, lost, and lost again—for Venice' sake !'
I turned. There lay a man no longer young,
Wasted with fever. I had marked, none hung
About his bed, as friends, with tenderness,
And, when the priest went by, he spared to bless,
Glancing perplexed—perhaps mere sullenness.
I stopped and questioned : 'What is lost, my friend ?'
'My soul is lost, and now draws near the end.
My soul is surely lost. Send me no priest !
They sing and solemnise the marriage feast
Of man's salvation in the house of love,
And I in Hell, and God in Heaven above,
And Venice safe and fair on earth between—
No love of mine—mere service—for my Queen.'

He was a seaman, and the tale he tells the doctor
before he dies is strange and not a little terrible.
Wild rage against a foster-brother who had bitterly
wronged him, and who was one of the ten rulers
over Venice, drives him to make a mad oath that
on the day when he does anything for his country's
good he will give his soul to Satan. That night he
sails for Dalmatia, and as he is keeping the watch,
he sees a phantom boat with seven fiends sailing to
Venice :

I heard the fiends' shrill cry : 'For Venice' good !
Rival thine ancient foe in gratitude,
Then come and make thy home with us in Hell !'
I knew it must be so. I knew the spell
Of Satan on my soul. I felt the power
Granted by God to serve Him one last hour,

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Then fall for ever as the curse had wrought.
 I climbed aloft. My brain had grown one thought,
 One hope, one purpose. And I heard the hiss
 Of raging disappointment, loth to miss
 Its prey— I heard the lapping of the flame,
 That through the blanched figures went and came,
 Darting in frenzy to the devils' yell.
 I set that cross on high, and cried : ' To Hell
 My soul for ever, and my deed to God !
 Once Venice guarded safe, let this vile clod
 Drift where fate will.'

And then (the hideous laugh
 Of fiends in full possession, keen to quaff
 The wine of one new soul not weak with tears,
 Pealing like ruinous thunder in mine ears)
 I fell, and heard no more. The pale day broke
 Through lazar-windows, when once more I woke,
 Remembering I might no more dare to pray.

The idea of the story is extremely powerful, and *Venetia Victrix* is certainly the best poem in the volume—better than *Ophelion*, which is vague, and than *A Friar's Story*, which is pretty but ordinary. It shows that we have in Miss Fitz Gerald a new singer of considerable ability and vigour of mind, and it serves to remind us of the splendid dramatic possibilities extant in life, which are ready for poetry, and unsuitable for the stage. What is really dramatic is not necessarily that which is fitting for presentation in a theatre. The theatre is an accident of the dramatic form. It is not essential to it. We have been deluded by the name of action. To think is to act.

Of the shorter poems collected here, this *Hymn to Persephone* is, perhaps, the best :

Oh, fill my cup, Persephone,
 With dim red wine of Spring,
 And drop therein a faded leaf
 Plucked from the Autumn's bearded sheaf,
 Whence, dread one, I may quaff to thee,
 While all the woodlands ring.

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Oh, fill my heart, Persephone,
With thine immortal pain,
That lingers round the willow bowers
In memories of old happy hours,
When thou didst wander fair and free
O'er Enna's blooming plain.

Oh, fill my soul, Persephone,
With music all thine own !
Teach me some song thy childhood knew,
Lisped in the meadow's morning dew,
Or chant on this high windy lea,
Thy godhead's ceaseless moan.

But this *Venetian Song* also has a good deal of
charm :

Leaning between carved stone and stone,
As glossy birds peer from a nest
Scooped in the crumbling trunk where rest
Their freckled eggs, I pause alone
And linger in the light awhile,
Waiting for joy to come to me—
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

I gaze—then turn and ply my loom,
Or broider blossoms close beside ;
The morning world lies warm and wide,
But here is dim, cool silent gloom,
Gold crust and crimson velvet pile,
And not one face to smile on me—
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

Over the world the splendours break
Of morning light and noontide glow,
And when the broad red sun sinks low,
And in the wave long shadows shake,
Youths, maidens, glad with song and wile,
Glide and are gone, and leave with me
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

Darwinism and Politics, by Mr. David Ritchie, of

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Jesus College, Oxford, contains some very interesting speculations on the position and the future of women in the modern State. The one objection to the equality of the sexes that he considers deserves serious attention is that made by Sir James Stephen in his clever attack on John Stuart Mill. Sir James Stephen points out in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, that women may suffer more than they have done, if plunged into a nominally equal but really unequal contest in the already overcrowded labour market. Mr. Ritchie answers that, while the conclusion usually drawn from this argument is a sentimental reaction in favour of the old family ideal, as, for instance, in Mr. Besant's books, there is another alternative, and that is the resettling of the labour question. 'The elevation of the status of women and the regulation of the conditions of labour are ultimately,' he says, 'inseparable questions. On the basis of individualism, I cannot see how it is possible to answer the objections of Sir James Stephen.' Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his *Sociology*, expresses his fear that women, if admitted now to political life, might do mischief by introducing the ethics of the family into the State. 'Under the ethics of the family the greatest benefits must be given where the merits are smallest; under the ethics of the State the benefits must be proportioned to the merits.' In answer to this, Mr. Ritchie asks whether in any society we have ever seen people so get benefits in proportion to their merits, and protests against Mr. Spencer's separation of the ethics of the family from those of the State. If something is right in a family, it is difficult to see why it is therefore, without any further reason, wrong in the State. If the participation of women

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in politics means that as a good family educates all its members, so must a good State, what better issue could there be? The family ideal of the State may be difficult of attainment, but as an ideal it is better than the policeman theory. It would mean the moralisation of politics. The cultivation of separate sorts of virtues and separate ideals of duty in men and women has led to the whole social fabric being weaker and unhealthier than it need be. As for the objection that in countries where it is considered necessary to have compulsory military service for all men, it would be unjust and inexpedient that women should have a voice in political matters, Mr. Ritchie meets it, or tries to meet it, by proposing that all women physically fitted for such purpose should be compelled to undergo training as nurses, and should be liable to be called upon to serve as nurses in time of war. This training, he remarks, 'would be more useful to them and to the community in time of peace than his military training is to the peasant or artisan.' Mr. Ritchie's little book is extremely suggestive, and full of valuable ideas for the philosophic student of sociology.

Mr. Alan Cole's lecture on Irish lace, delivered recently before the Society of Arts, contains some extremely useful suggestions as to the best method of securing an immediate connection between the art schools of a country and the country's ordinary manufactures. In 1888, Mr. Cole was deputed by the Department of Science and Art to lecture at Cork and at Limerick on the subject of lace-making, and to give a history of its rise and development in other countries, as well as a review of the many

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kinds of ornamental patterns used from the sixteenth century to modern times. In order to make these lectures of practical value, Mr. Cole placed typical specimens of Irish laces beside Italian, Flemish, and French laces, which seem to be the prototypes of the lace of Ireland. The public interest was immediately aroused. Some of the newspapers stoutly maintained that the ornament and patterns of Irish lace were of such a national character that it was wrong to asperse them on that score. Others took a different view, and came to the conclusion that Irish lace could be vastly improved in all respects, if some systematic action could be taken to induce the lace-makers to work from more intelligently composed patterns than those in general use. There was a consensus of opinion that the workmanship of Irish laces was good, and that it could be applied to better materials than those ordinarily used, and that its methods were suited to render a greater variety of patterns than those usually attempted.

These and other circumstances seem to have prompted the promoters of the Cork Exhibition to further efforts in the cause of lace-making. Towards the close of the year 1888 they made fresh representations to Government, and inquired what forms of State assistance could be given. A number of convents in the neighbourhood of Cork was engaged in giving instruction to children under their care in lace and crochet making. At some, rooms were allotted for the use of grown-up workers who made laces under the supervision of the nuns. These convents obviously were centres where experiments in reform could be tried. The convents, however, lacked instruction in the designing of patterns for laces. An excellent School of Art was at work at

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Cork, but the students there had not been instructed in specially designing for lace. If the convents with their workrooms could be brought into relation with this School of Art, it seemed possible that something of a serious character might be done to benefit lace-makers, and also to open up a new field in ornamental design for the students at the School of Art. The rules of the Department of Science and Art were found to be adapted to aid in meeting such wants as those sketched out by the promoters at Cork. As the nuns in the different lace-making convents had not been able to attend in Cork to hear Mr. Cole's lectures, they asked that he should visit them and repeat them at the convents. This Mr. Cole did early in 1884, the masters of the local Schools of Art accompanying him on his visits. Negotiations were forthwith opened for connecting the convents with the art schools. By the end of 1885 some six or seven different lace-making convents had placed themselves in connection with Schools of Art at Cork and Waterford. These convents were attended not only by the nuns but by outside pupils also; and, at the request of the convents, Mr. Cole has visited them twice a year, lecturing and giving advice upon designs for lace. The composition of new patterns for lace was attempted, and old patterns which had degenerated were revised and redrawn for the use of the workers connected with the convents. There are now twelve convents, Mr. Cole tells us, where instruction in drawing and in the composition of patterns is given, and some of the students have won some of the higher prizes offered by the Department of Science and Art for designing lace-patterns.

The Cork School of Art then acquired a collection

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of finely-patterned old laces, selections from which are freely circulated through the different convents connected with that school. They have also the privilege of borrowing similar specimens of old lace from the South Kensington Museum. So successful has been the system of education pursued by Mr. Brennan, the head-master of the Cork School of Art, that two female students of his school last year gained the gold and silver medals for their designs for laces and crochets at the national competition which annually takes place in London between all the Schools of Art in the United Kingdom. As for the many lace-makers who were not connected either with the convents or with the art schools, in order to assist them, a committee of ladies and gentlemen interested in Irish lace-making raised subscriptions, and offered prizes to be competed for by designers generally. The best designs were then placed out with lace-makers, and carried into execution. It is, of course, often said that the proper person to make the design is the lace-maker. Mr. Cole, however, points out that from the sixteenth century forward the patterns for ornamental laces have always been designed by decorative artists having knowledge of the composition of ornament, and of the materials for which they were called upon to design. Lace pattern books were published in considerable quantity in Italy, France and Germany during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from these the lace-makers worked. Many lace-makers would, no doubt, derive benefit from practice in drawing, in discriminating between well and badly shaped forms. But the skill they are primarily required to show and to develop is one of fine fingers in reproducing beautiful forms in threads. The conception, arrangement, and

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drawing of beautiful forms for a design, have to be undertaken by decorative artists acquainted with the limitations of those materials and methods which the ultimate expression of the design involves.

This lovely Irish art of lace-making is very much indebted to Mr. Cole, who has really re-created it, given it new life, and shown it the true artistic lines on which to progress. Hardly £20,000 a year is spent by England upon Irish laces, and almost all of this goes upon the cheaper and commoner kinds. And yet, as Mr. Cole points out, it is possible to produce Irish laces of as high artistic quality as almost any foreign laces. The Queen, Lady Londonderry, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Mrs. Alfred Morrison, and others, have done much to encourage the Irish workers, and it rests largely with the ladies of England whether this beautiful art lives or dies. The real good of a piece of lace, says Mr. Ruskin, is 'that it should show, first, that the designer of it had a pretty fancy; next, that the maker of it had fine fingers; lastly, that the wearer of it has worthiness or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult to obtain, and common-sense enough not to wear it on all occasions.'

The High-Caste Hindu Woman is an interesting book. It is from the pen of the Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, and the introduction is written by Miss Rachel Bodley, M.D., the Dean of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. The story of the parentage of this learned lady is very curious. A certain Hindu, being on a religious pilgrimage with his family, which consisted of his wife and two daughters, one nine and the other seven years of age, stopped in a town to rest for a day or two. One

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morning the Hindu was bathing in the sacred river Godavari, near the town, when he saw a fine-looking man coming there to bathe also. After the ablution and the morning prayers were over, the father inquired of the stranger who he was and whence he came. On learning his caste, and clan, and dwelling-place, and also that he was a widower, he offered him his little daughter of nine in marriage. All things were settled in an hour or so; next day the marriage was concluded, and the little girl placed in the possession of the stranger, who took her nearly nine hundred miles away from her home, and gave her into the charge of his mother. The stranger was the learned Ananta Shastri, a Brahman pundit, who had very advanced views on the subject of woman's education, and he determined that he would teach his girl-wife Sanskrit, and give her the intellectual culture that had been always denied to women in India. Their daughter was the Pundita Ramabai, who, after the death of her parents, travelled all over India advocating the cause of female education, and to whom seems to be due the first suggestion for the establishment of the profession of women doctors. In 1866, Miss Mary Carpenter made a short tour in India for the purpose of finding out some way by which women's condition in that country might be improved. She at once discovered that the chief means by which the desired end could be accomplished was by furnishing women teachers for the Hindu Zenanas. She suggested that the British Government should establish normal schools for training women teachers, and that scholarships should be awarded to girls in order to prolong their school-going period, and to assist indigent women who would otherwise be unable to pursue their studies.

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In response to Miss Carpenter's appeal, upon her return to England, the English Government founded several schools for women in India, and a few 'Mary Carpenter Scholarships' were endowed by benevolent persons. These schools were open to women of every caste; but while they have undoubtedly been of use, they have not realised the hopes of their founders, chiefly through the impossibility of keeping caste rules in them. Ramabai, in a very eloquent chapter, proposes to solve the problem in a different way. Her suggestion is that houses should be opened for the young and high-caste child-widows, where they can take shelter without the fear of losing their caste, or of being disturbed in their religious belief, and where they may have entire freedom of action as regards caste rules. The whole account given by the Pandita of the life of the high-caste Hindu lady is full of suggestion for the social reformer and the student of progress, and her book, which is wonderfully well written, is likely to produce a radical change in the educational schemes that at present prevail in India.

- (1) *Venetia Victrix*. By Caroline Fitz Gerald. (Macmillan and Co.)
- (2) *Darwinism and Politics*. By David Ritchie, Jesus College, Oxford. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)
- (3) *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*. By the Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati. (Bell and Sons.)

OUIDA'S NEW NOVEL

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 17, 1889.)

OUIDA is the last of the romantics. She belongs to the school of Bulwer Lytton and George Sand, though she may lack the learning of the one and the sincerity of the other. She tries to make passion, imagination, and poetry

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part of fiction. She still believes in heroes and in heroines. She is florid and fervent and fanciful. Yet even she, the high priestess of the impossible, is affected by her age. Her last book, *Guilderoy* as she calls it, is an elaborate psychological study of modern temperaments. For her, it is realistic, and she has certainly caught much of the tone and temper of the society of our day. Her people move with ease and grace and indolence. The book may be described as a study of the peerage from a poetical point of view. Those who are tired of mediocre young curates who have doubts, of serious young ladies who have missions, and of the ordinary figure-heads of most of the English fiction of our time, might turn with pleasure, if not with profit, to this amazing romance. It is a resplendent picture of our aristocracy. No expense has been spared in gilding. For the comparatively small sum of £1, 11s. 6d. one is introduced to the best society. The central figures are exaggerated, but the background is admirable. In spite of everything, it gives one a sense of something like life.

What is the story? Well, we must admit that we have a faint suspicion that Ouida has told it to us before. Lord Guilderoy, 'whose name was as old as the days of Knut,' falls madly in love, or fancies that he falls madly in love, with a rustic Perdita, a provincial Artemis who has 'a Gainsborough face, with wide-opened questioning eyes and tumbled auburn hair.' She is poor but well-born, being the only child of Mr. Vernon of Llanarth, a curious recluse, who is half a pedant and half Don Quixote. Guilderoy marries her and, tiring of her shyness, her lack of power to express herself, her want of knowledge of fashionable life, returns to an old passion for a wonderful creature called the Duchess of Scriá.

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Lady Guilderoy becomes ice; the Duchess becomes fire; at the end of the book Guilderoy is a pitiable object. He has to submit to be forgiven by one woman, and to endure to be forgotten by the other. He is thoroughly weak, thoroughly worthless, and the most fascinating person in the whole story. Then there is his sister Lady Sunbury, who is very anxious for Guilderoy to marry, and is quite determined to hate his wife. She is really a capital sketch. Ouida describes her as 'one of those admirably virtuous women who are more likely to turn men away from the paths of virtue than the wickedest of sirens.' She irritates herself, alienates her children, and infuriates her husband:

'You are perfectly right; I know you are always right; I admit you are; but it is just that which makes you so damnable odious!' said Lord Sunbury once, in a burst of rage, in his town house, speaking in such stentorian tones that the people passing up Grosvenor Street looked up at his open windows, and a crossing-sweeper said to a match-seller, 'My eye! ain't he giving it to the old gal like blazes.'

The noblest character in the book is Lord Aubrey. As he is not a genius he, naturally, behaves admirably on every occasion. He begins by pitying the neglected Lady Guilderoy, and ends by loving her, but he makes the great renunciation with considerable effect, and, having induced Lady Guilderoy to receive back her husband, he accepts 'a distant and arduous Viceroyalty.' He is Ouida's ideal of the true politician, for Ouida has apparently taken to the study of English politics. A great deal of her book is devoted to political disquisitions. She believes that the proper rulers of a country like ours are the aristocrats. Oligarchy has great fascinations for her. She thinks meanly of the people and adores

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the House of Lords and Lord Salisbury. Here are some of her views. We will not call them ideas:

The House of Lords wants nothing of the nation, and therefore it is the only candid and disinterested guardian of the people's needs and resources. It has never withstood the real desire of the country: it has only stood between the country and its impetuous and evanescent follies.

A democracy cannot understand honour; how should it? The Caucus is chiefly made up of men who sand their sugar, put alum in their bread, forge bayonets and girders which bend like willow-wands, send bad calico to India, and insure vessels at Lloyd's which they know will go to the bottom before they have been ten days at sea.

Lord Salisbury has often been accused of arrogance; people have never seen that what they mistook for arrogance was the natural, candid consciousness of a great noble that he is more capable of leading the country than most men composing it would be.

Democracy, after having made everything supremely hideous and uncomfortable for everybody, always ends by clinging to the coat tails of some successful general.

The prosperous politician may be honest, but his honesty is at best a questionable quality. The moment that a thing is a *métier*, it is wholly absurd to talk about any disinterestedness in the pursuit of it. To the professional politician national affairs are a manufacture into which he puts his audacity and his time, and out of which he expects to make so much percentage for his lifetime.

There is too great a tendency to govern the world by noise.

Ouida's aphorisms on women, love, and modern society are somewhat more characteristic:

Women speak as though the heart were to be treated at will like a stone, or a bath.

Half the passions of men die early, because they are expected to be eternal.

It is the folly of life that lends charm to it.

What is the cause of half the misery of women? That

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their love is so much more tenacious than the man's: it grows stronger as his grows weaker.

To endure the country in England for long, one must have the rusticity of Wordsworth's mind, and boots and stockings as homely.

It is because men feel the necessity to explain that they drop into the habit of saying what is not true. Wise is the woman who never insists on an explanation.

Love can make its own world in a solitude *à deux*, but marriage cannot.

Nominally monogamous, all cultured society is polygamous; often even polyandrous.

Moralists say that a soul should resist passion. They might as well say that a house should resist an earthquake.

The whole world is just now on its knees before the poorer classes: all the cardinal virtues are taken for granted in them, and it is only property of any kind which is the sinner.

Men are not merciful to women's tears as a rule; and when it is a woman belonging to them who weeps, they only go out, and slam the door behind them.

Men always consider women unjust to them, when they fail to deify their weaknesses.

No passion, once broken, will ever bear renewal.

Feeling loses its force and its delicacy if we put it under the microscope too often.

Anything which is not flattery seems injustice to a woman.

When society is aware that you think it a flock of geese, it revenges itself by hissing loudly behind your back.

Of descriptions of scenery and art we have, of course, a large number, and it is impossible not to recognise the touch of the real Ouida manner in the following:

It was an old palace: lofty, spacious, magnificent, and dull. Busts of dusky yellow marble, weird bronzes stretching out gaunt arms into the darkness, ivories brown with age, worn brocades with gold threads gleaming in them, and tapestries with strange and pallid figures of dead gods, were all half revealed and half obscured in the twilight. As he moved through them, a figure which looked almost as pale as the

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Adonis of the tapestry and was erect and motionless like the statue of the wounded Love, came before his sight out of the darkness. It was that of Gladys.

It is a manner full of exaggeration and over-emphasis, but with some remarkable rhetorical qualities and a good deal of colour. Ouida is fond of airing a smattering of culture, but she has a certain intrinsic insight into things and, though she is rarely true, she is never dull. *Guilderoy*, with all its faults, which are great, and its absurdities, which are greater, is a book to be read.

Guilderoy. By Ouida. (Chatto and Windus.)

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VI

(*Woman's World*, June 1880.)

A WRITER in the *Quarterly Review* for January 1874 says:

No literary event since the war has excited anything like such a sensation in Paris as the publication of the *Lettres à une Inconnue*. Even politics became a secondary consideration for the hour, and academicians or deputies of opposite parties might be seen eagerly accosting each other in the Chamber or the street to inquire who this fascinating and perplexing 'unknown' could be. The statement in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that she was an Englishwoman, moving in brilliant society, was not supported by evidence; and M. Blanchard, the painter, from whom the publisher received the manuscripts, died most provokingly at the very commencement of the inquiry, and made no sign. Some intimate friends of Mérimée, rendered incredulous by wounded self-love at not having been admitted to his confidence, insisted that there was no secret to tell; their hypothesis being that the *Inconnue* was a myth, and the letters a romance, with which some petty

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details of actual life had been interwoven to keep up the mystification.

But an artist like Mérimée would not have left his work in so unformed a state, so defaced by repetitions, or with such a want of proportion between the parts. The *Inconnue* was undoubtedly a real person, and her letters in answer to those of Mérimée have just been published by Messrs. Macmillan under the title of *An Author's Love*.

Her letters? Well, they are such letters as she might have written. 'By the tideless sea at Cannes on a summer day,' says their anonymous author, 'I had fallen asleep, and the plashing of the waves upon the shore had doubtless made me dream. When I awoke the yellow paper-covered volumes of Prosper Mérimée's *Lettres à une Inconnue* lay beside me; I had been reading the book before I fell asleep, but the answers—had they ever been written, or had I only dreamed?' The invention of the love-letters of a curious and unknown personality, the heroine of one of the great literary flirtations of our age, was a clever idea, and certainly the author has carried out his scheme with wonderful success; with such success indeed that it is said that one of our statesmen, whose name occurs more than once in the volume, was for a moment completely taken in by what is really a *jeu-d'esprit*, the first serious joke perpetrated by Messrs. Macmillan in their publishing capacity. Perhaps it is too much to call it a joke. It is a fine, delicate piece of fiction, an imaginative attempt to complete a real romance. As we had the letters of the academic Romeo, it was obviously right that we should pretend we had the answers of the clever and somewhat *mondaine* Juliet. Or is it Juliet herself, in her little Paris

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boudoir, looking over these two volumes with a sad, cynical smile? Well, to be put into fiction is always a tribute to one's reality.

As for extracts from these fascinating forgeries, the letters should be read in conjunction with those of Mérimée himself. It is difficult to judge of them by samples. We find the *Inconnue* first in London, probably in 1840.

Little (she writes) can you imagine the storm of indignation you aroused in me by your remark that your feelings for me were those suitable for a fourteen-year-old niece. *Merci*. Anything less like a respectable uncle than yourself I cannot well imagine. The rôle would never suit you, believe me, so do not try it.

Now in return for your story of the phlegmatic musical animal who called forth such stormy devotion in a female breast, and who, himself cold and indifferent, was loved to the extent of a watery grave being sought by his inamorata as solace for his indifference, let me ask the question why the women who torment men with their uncertain tempers, drive them wild with jealousy, laugh contemptuously at their humble entreaties, and fling their money to the winds, have twice the hold upon their affections that the patient, long-suffering, domestic, frugal Griseldas have, whose existences are one long penance of unsuccessful efforts to please? Answer this comprehensively, and you will have solved a riddle which has puzzled women since Eve asked questions in Paradise.

Later on she writes :

Why should all natures be alike? It would make the old saws useless if they were, and deprive us of one of the truest of them all, 'Variety is the spice of life.' How terribly monotonous it would be if all the flowers were roses, every woman a queen, and each man a philosopher. My private opinion is that it takes at least six men such as one meets every day to make one really valuable one. I like so many men for one particular quality which they possess, and so few men for all. *Comprenez-vous?*

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In another place :

Is it not a trifle dangerous, this experiment we are trying of a friendship in pen and ink and paper? A letter. What thing on earth more dangerous to confide in? Written at blood heat, it may reach its destination when the recipient's mental thermometer counts zero, and the burning words and thrilling sentences may turn to ice and be congealed as they are read. . . . A letter; the most uncertain thing in a world of uncertainties, the best or the worst thing devised by mortals.

Again :

Surely it was for you, *mon cher*, that the description given of a friend of mine was originally intended. He is a trifle cynical, this friend, and decidedly pessimistic, and of him it was reported that he never believed in anything until he saw it, and then he was convinced that it was an optical illusion. The accuracy of the description struck me.

They seem to have loved each other best when they were parted.

I think I cannot bear it much longer, this incessant quarrelling when we meet, and your unkindness during the short time that you are with me. Why not let it all end? it would be better for both of us. I do not love you less when I write these words; if you could know the sadness which they echo in my heart you would believe this. No, I think I love you more, but I cannot understand you. As you have often said, our natures must be very different, entirely different; if so, what is this curious bond between them? To me you seem possessed with some strange restlessness and morbid melancholy which utterly spoils your life, and in return you never see me without overwhelming me with reproaches, if not for one thing, for another. I tell you I cannot, will not, bear it longer. If you love me, then in God's name cease tormenting me as well as yourself with these wretched doubts and questionings and complaints. I have been ill, seriously ill, and there is nothing to account for my illness save the misery of this apparently hopeless state of things existing between us. You have made me weep bitter tears of alternate self-reproach and indignation,

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and finally of complete miserable bewilderment as to this unhappy condition of affairs. Believe me, tears like these are not good to mingle with love, they are too bitter, too scorching, they blister love's wings and fall too heavily on love's heart. I feel worn out with a dreary sort of hopelessness; if you know a cure for pain like this send it to me quickly.

Yet, in the very next letter, she says to him:

Although I said good-bye to you less than an hour ago, I cannot refrain from writing to tell you that a happy calm which seems to penetrate my whole being seems also to have wiped out all remembrance of the misery and unhappiness which has overwhelmed me lately. Why cannot it always be so, or would life perhaps be then too blessed, too wholly happy for it to be life? I know that you are free to-night, will you not write to me, that the first words my eyes fall upon to-morrow shall prove that to-day has not been a dream? Yes, write to me.

The letter that immediately follows is one of six words only:

Let me dream—Let me dream.

In the following there are interesting touches of actuality:

Did you ever try a cup of tea (the national beverage, by the way) at an English railway station? If you have not, I would advise you, as a friend, to continue to abstain! The names of the American drinks are rather against them, the straws are, I think, about the best part of them. You do not tell me what you think of Mr. Disraeli. I once met him at a ball at the Duke of Sutherland's in the long picture gallery of Stafford House. I was walking with Lord Shrewsbury, and without a word of warning he stopped and introduced him, mentioning with reckless mendacity that I had read every book he had written and admired them all, then he coolly walked off and left me standing face to face with the great statesman. He talked to me for some time, and I studied him carefully. I should say he was a man with one steady aim: endless patience, untiring perseverance, iron concentration; marking

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out one straight line before him so unbending that despite themselves men stand aside as it is drawn straightly and steadily on. A man who believes that determination brings strength, strength brings endurance, and endurance brings success. You know how often in his novels he speaks of the influence of women, socially, morally, and politically, yet his manner was the least interested or deferential in talking that I have ever met with in a man of his class. He certainly thought this particular woman of singularly small account, or else the brusque and tactless allusion to his books may perhaps have annoyed him as it did me; but whatever the cause, when he promptly left me at the first approach of a mutual acquaintance, I felt distinctly snubbed. Of the two men, Mr. Gladstone was infinitely more agreeable in his manner, he left one with the pleasant feeling of measuring a little higher in cubic inches than one did before, than which I know no more delightful sensation. *A Paris, bientôt.*

Elsewhere, we find cleverly-written descriptions of life in Italy, in Algiers, at Hombourg, at French boarding-houses; stories about Napoleon III., Guizot, Prince Gortschakoff, Montalembert, and others; political speculations, literary criticisms, and witty social scandal; and everywhere a keen sense of humour, a wonderful power of observation. As reconstructed in these letters, the *Inconnue* seems to have been not unlike Mérimée himself. She had the same restless, unyielding, independent character. Each desired to analyse the other. Each, being a critic, was better fitted for friendship than for love. 'We are so different,' said Mérimée once to her, 'that we can hardly understand each other.' But it was because they were so alike that each remained a mystery to the other. Yet they ultimately attained to a high altitude of loyal and faithful friendship, and from a purely literary point of view these fictitious letters give the finishing touch to the

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strange romance that so stirred Paris fifteen years ago. Perhaps the letters will be published some day. When they are, how interesting to compare them!

The Bird-Bride, by Graham R. Tomson, is a collection of romantic ballads, delicate sonnets, and metrical studies in foreign fanciful forms. The poem that gives its title to the book is the lament of an Eskimo hunter over the loss of his wife and children.

Years ago, on the flat white strand,
I won my sweet sea-girl:
Wrapped in my coat of the snow-white fur,
I watched the wild birds settle and stir,
The grey gulls gather and whirl.

One, the greatest of all the flock,
Perched on an ice-floe bare,
Called and cried as her heart were broke,
And straight they were changed, that fleet bird-folk,
To women young and fair.

Swift I sprang from my hiding-place
And held the fairest fast;
I held her fast, the sweet, strange thing:
Her comrades skirled, but they all took wing,
And smote me as they passed.

I bore her safe to my warm snow house;
Full sweetly there she smiled;
And yet, whenever the shrill winds blew,
She would beat her long white arms anew,
And her eyes glanced quick and wild.

But I took her to wife, and clothed her warm
With skins of the gleaming seal;
Her wandering glances sank to rest
When she held a babe to her fair, warm breast,
And she loved me dear and leal.

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Together we tracked the fox and the seal,
And at her behest I swore
That bird and beast my bow might slay
For meat and for raiment, day by day,
But never a grey gull more.

Famine comes upon the land, and the hunter,
forgetting his oath, slays four sea-gulls for food.
The bird-wife 'shrilled out in a woful cry,' and
taking the plumage of the dead birds, she makes
wings for her children and for herself, and flies away
with them.

'Babes of mine, of the wild wind's kin,
Feather ye quick, nor stay.
Oh, oh! but the wild winds blow!
Babes of mine, it is time to go:
Up, dear hearts, and away!'

And lo! the grey plumes covered them all,
Shoulder and breast and brow.
I felt the wind of their whirling flight:
Was it sea or sky? was it day or night?
It is always night-time now.

Dear, will you never relent, come back?
I loved you long and true.
O winged white wife, and our children three,
Of the wild wind's kin though you surely be,
Are ye not of my kin too?

Ay, ye once were mine, and, till I forget,
Ye are mine forever and aye.
Mine, wherever your wild wings go,
While shrill winds whistle across the snow
And the skies are blear and grey.

Some powerful and strong ballads follow, many
of which, such as *The Cruel Priest*, *Deid Folks' Ferry*, and *Märchen*, are in that curious combina-
tion of Scotch and Border dialect so much affected
now by our modern poets. Certainly dialect is

SOME LITERARY NOTES

dramatic. It is a vivid method of re-creating a past that never existed. It is something between 'A Return to Nature' and 'A Return to the Glossary.' It is so artificial that it is really naïve. From the point of view of mere music, much may be said for it. Wonderful diminutives lend new notes of tenderness to the song. There are possibilities of fresh rhymes, and in search for a fresh rhyme poets may be excused if they wander from the broad high-road of classical utterance into devious byways and less-trodden paths. Sometimes one is tempted to look on dialect as expressing simply the pathos of provincialisms, but there is more in it than mere mispronunciations. With the revival of an antique form, often comes the revival of an antique spirit. Through limitations that are sometimes uncouth, and always narrow, comes Tragedy herself; and though she may stammer in her utterance, and deck herself in cast-off weeds and trammelling raiment, still we must hold ourselves in readiness to accept her, so rare are her visits to us now, so rare her presence in an age that demands a happy ending from every play, and that sees in the theatre merely a source of amusement. The form, too, of the ballad—how perfect it is in its dramatic unity! It is so perfect that we must forgive it its dialect, if it happens to speak in that strange tongue.

Then by cam' the bride's company
Wi' torches burning bright.
'Tak' up, tak' up your bonny bride
A' in the mirk midnight!

Oh, wan, wan was the bridegroom's face
And wan, wan was the bride,
But clay-cauld was the young mess-priest
That stood them twa beside!

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Says, 'Rax me out your hand, Sir Knight,
And wed her wi' this ring';
And the deid bride's hand it was as cauld
As ony earthly thing.

The priest he touched that lady's hand,
And never a word he said;
The priest he touched that lady's hand,
And his ain was wet and red.

The priest he lifted his ain right hand,
And the red blood dripped and fell.
Says, 'I loved ye, lady, and ye loved me;
Sae I took your life mysel'.

Oh! red, red was the dawn o' day,
And tall was the gallows-tree:
The Southland lord to his ain has fled
And the mess-priest's hangit hie!

Of the sonnets, this *To Herodotus* is worth
quoting:

Far-travelled coaster of the midland seas,
What marvels did those curious eyes behold!
Winged snakes, and carven labyrinths of old;
The emerald column raised to Heracles;
King Perseus' shrine upon the Chemmian leas;
Four-footed fishes, decked with gems and gold;
But thou didst leave some secrets yet untold,
And veiled the dread Osirian mysteries.

And now the golden asphodels among
Thy footsteps fare, and to the lordly dead
Thou tellest all the stories left unsaid
Of secret rites and runes forgotten long,
Of that dark folk who ate the Lotus-bread
And sang the melancholy Linus-song.

Mrs. Tomson has certainly a very refined sense of
form. Her verse, especially in the series entitled
New Words to Old Tunes, has grace and distinction.
Some of the shorter poems are, to use a phrase made

A THOUGHT-READER'S NOVEL

classical by Mr. Pater, 'little carved ivories of speech.' She is one of our most artistic workers in poetry, and treats language as a fine material.

(1) *An Author's Love: Being the Unpublished Letters of Prosper Mérimée's 'Inconnue.'* (Macmillan and Co.)

(2) *The Bird-Bride: A Volume of Ballads and Sonnets.* By Graham R. Tomson. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

A THOUGHT-READER'S NOVEL

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 5, 1889.)

THERE is a great deal to be said in favour of reading a novel backwards. The last page is, as a rule, the most interesting, and when one begins with the catastrophe or the *dénouement* one feels on pleasant terms of equality with the author. It is like going behind the scenes of a theatre. One is no longer taken in, and the hairbreadth escapes of the hero and the wild agonies of the heroine leave one absolutely unmoved. One knows the jealously-guarded secret, and one can afford to smile at the quite unnecessary anxiety that the puppets of fiction always consider it their duty to display. In the case of Mr. Stuart Cumberland's novel, *The Vasty Deep*, as he calls it, the last page is certainly thrilling and makes us curious to know more about 'Brown, the medium.'

Scene, a padded room in a mad-house in the United States.

A gibbering lunatic discovered dashing wildly about the chamber as if in the act of chasing invisible forms.

'This is our worst case,' says a doctor opening the cell to one of the visitors in lunacy. 'He was a spirit medium and he is hourly haunted by the

REVIEWS

creations of his fancy. We have to carefully watch him, for he has developed suicidal tendencies.'

The lunatic makes a dash at the retreating form of his visitors, and, as the door closes upon him, sinks with a yell upon the floor.

A week later the lifeless body of Brown, the medium, is found suspended from the gas bracket in his cell.

How clearly one sees it all! How forcible and direct the style is! And what a thrilling touch of actuality the simple mention of the 'gas bracket' gives us! Certainly *The Vasty Deep* is a book to be read.

And we have read it; read it with great care. Though it is largely autobiographical, it is none the less a work of fiction and, though some of us may think that there is very little use in exposing what is already exposed and revealing the secrets of Polichinelle, no doubt there are many who will be interested to hear of the tricks and deceptions of crafty mediums, of their gauze masks, telescopic rods and invisible silk threads, and of the marvellous raps they can produce simply by displacing the *peroneus longus* muscle! The book opens with a description of the scene by the death-bed of Alderman Parkinson. Dr. Josiah Brown, the eminent medium, is in attendance and tries to comfort the honest merchant by producing noises on the bed-post. Mr. Parkinson, however, being extremely anxious to revisit Mrs. Parkinson, in a materialised form after death, will not be satisfied till he has received from his wife a solemn promise that she will not marry again, such a marriage being, in his eyes, nothing more nor less than bigamy. Having received an assurance to this effect from her, Mr.

A THOUGHT-READER'S NOVEL

Parkinson dies, his soul, according to the medium, being escorted to the spheres by 'a band of white-robed spirits.' This is the prologue. The next chapter is entitled 'Five Years After.' Violet Parkinson, the Alderman's only child, is in love with Jack Alston, who is 'poor, but clever.' Mrs. Parkinson, however, will not hear of any marriage till the deceased Alderman has materialised himself and given his formal consent. A scance is held at which Jack Alston unmasks the medium and shows Dr. Josiah Brown to be an impostor—a foolish act, on his part, as he is at once ordered to leave the house by the infuriated Mrs. Parkinson, whose faith in the Doctor is not in the least shaken by the unfortunate exposure.

The lovers are consequently parted. Jack sails for Newfoundland, is shipwrecked and carefully, somewhat too carefully, tended by 'La-ki-wa, or the Star that shines,' a lovely Indian maiden who belongs to the tribe of the Micmacs. She is a fascinating creature who wears 'a necklace composed of thirteen nuggets of pure gold,' a blanket of English manufacture and trousers of tanned leather. In fact, as Mr. Stuart Cumberland observes, she looks 'the embodiment of fresh dewy morn.' When Jack, on recovering his senses, sees her, he naturally inquires who she is. She answers, in the simple utterance endeared to us by Fenimore Cooper, 'I am La-ki-wa. I am the only child of my father, Tall Pine, chief of the Dildoos.' She talks, Mr. Cumberland informs us, very good English. Jack at once entrusts her with the following telegram which he writes on the back of a five-pound note:—

Miss Violet Parkinson, Hotel Kronprinz, Franzensbad, Austria.—Safe.

JACK.

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But La-ki-wa, we regret to say, says to herself, 'He belongs to Tall Pine, to the Dildoos, and to me,' and never sends the telegram. Subsequently, La-ki-wa proposes to Jack who promptly rejects her and, with the usual callousness of men, offers her a brother's love. La-ki-wa, naturally, regrets the premature disclosure of her passion and weeps. 'My brother,' she remarks, 'will think that I have the timid heart of a deer with the crying voice of a papoose. I, the daughter of Tall Pine—I a Micmac, to show the grief that is in my heart. O, my brother, I am ashamed.' Jack comforts her with the hollow sophistries of a civilised being and gives her his photograph. As he is on his way to the steamer he receives from Big Deer a soiled piece of a biscuit bag. On it is written La-ki-wa's confession of her disgraceful behaviour about the telegram. 'His thoughts,' Mr. Cumberland tells us, 'were bitter towards La-ki-wa, but they gradually softened when he remembered what he owed her.'

Everything ends happily. Jack arrives in England just in time to prevent Dr. Josiah Brown from mesmerising Violet whom the cunning doctor is anxious to marry, and he hurls his rival out of the window. The victim is discovered 'bruised and bleeding among the broken flower-pots' by a comic policeman. Mrs. Parkinson still believes in spiritualism, but refuses to have anything to do with Brown as she discovers that the deceased Alderman's 'materialised beard' was made only of 'horrid, coarse horse-hair.' Jack and Violet are married at last and Jack is horrid enough to send to 'La-ki-wa' another photograph. The end of Dr. Brown is chronicled above. Had we not known what was in store for him we should hardly have got through the book.

THE POETS' CORNER

There is a great deal too much padding in it about Dr. Slade and Dr. Bartram and other mediums, and the disquisitions on the commercial future of Newfoundland seem endless and are intolerable. However, there are many publics, and Mr. Stuart Cumberland is always sure of an audience. His chief fault is a tendency to low comedy; but some people like low comedy in fiction.

The Vasty Deep: A Strange Story of To-day. By Stuart Cumberland. (Sampson Low and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER

X

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 24, 1889.)

IS Mr. Alfred Austin among the Socialists? Has somebody converted the respectable editor of the respectable *National Review*? Has even dulness become revolutionary? From a poem in Mr. Austin's last volume this would seem to be the case. It is perhaps unfair to take our rhymers too seriously. Between the casual fancies of a poet and the callous facts of prose there is, or at least there should be, a wide difference. But since the poem in question, *Two Visions*, as Mr. Austin calls it, was begun in 1868 and revised in 1889 we may regard it as fully representative of Mr. Austin's mature views. He gives us, at any rate, in its somewhat lumbering and pedestrian verses, his conception of the perfect state:

Fearless, unveiled, and unattended
Strolled maidens to and fro:
Youths looked respect, but never bended
Obsequiously low.

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And each with other, sans condition,
Held parley brief or long,
Without provoking *coarse suspicion*
Of marriage, or of wrong.

All were well clad, and none were better,
And gems beheld I none,
Save where there hung a jewelled fetter,
Symbolic, in the sun.

I saw a noble-looking maiden
Close Dante's solemn book,
And go, with crate of linen laden,
And wash it in the brook.

Anon, a broad-browed poet, dragging
A load of logs along,
To warm his hearth, withal not flagging
In current of his song.

Each one some handicraft attempted
Or helped to till the soil:
None but the aged were exempted
From communistic toil.

Such an expression as 'coarse suspicion of marriage' is not very fortunate; the log-rolling poet of the fifth stanza is an ideal that we have already realised and one in which we had but little comfort, and the fourth stanza leaves us in doubt whether Mr. Austin means that washerwomen are to take to reading Dante, or that students of Italian literature are to wash their own clothes. But, on the whole, though Mr. Austin's vision of the *citta divina* of the future is not very inspiring, it is certainly extremely interesting as a sign of the times, and it is evident from the two concluding lines of the following stanzas that there will be no danger of the intellect being overworked:

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Age lorded not, nor rose the hectic
Up to the cheek of youth ;
But reigned throughout their dialectic
Sobriety of truth.

And if a long-held contest tended
To ill-defined result,
*It was by calm consent suspended
As over-difficult.*

Mr. Austin, however, has other moods, and, perhaps, he is at his best when he is writing about flowers. Occasionally he wearies the reader by tedious enumerations of plants, lacking indeed reticence and tact and selection in many of his descriptions, but, as a rule, he is very pleasant when he is babbling of green fields. How pretty these stanzas from the dedication are !

When vines, just newly burgeoned, link
Their hands to join the dance of Spring,
Green lizards glisten from cleft and chink,
And almond blossoms rosy pink
Cluster and perch, ere taking wing ;

Where over strips of emerald wheat
Glimmer red peach and snowy pear,
And nightingales all day long repeat
Their love-song, not less glad than sweet
They chant in sorrow and gloom elsewhere ;

Where purple iris-banners scale
Defending walls and crumbling ledge,
And virgin windflowers, lithe and frail,
Now mantling red, now trembling pale,
Peep out from furrow and hide in hedge.

Some of the sonnets also (notably, one entitled *When Acorns Fall*) are very charming, and though, as a whole, *Love's Widowhood* is tedious and prolix, still it contains some very felicitous touches. We

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wish, however, that Mr. Austin would not write such lines as

Pippins of every sort, and *codlins manifold*.

'Codlins manifold' is a monstrous expression.

Mr. W. J. Linton's fame as a wood-engraver has somewhat obscured the merits of his poetry. His *Claribel and Other Poems*, published in 1865, is now a scarce book, and far more scarce is the collection of lyrics which he printed in 1887 at his own press and brought out under the title of *Love-Lore*. The large and handsome volume that now lies before us contains nearly all these later poems as well as a selection from *Claribel* and many renderings, in the original metre, of French poems ranging from the thirteenth century to our own day. A portrait of Mr. Linton is prefixed, and the book is dedicated 'To William Bell Scott, my friend for nearly fifty years.' As a poet Mr. Linton is always fanciful with a studied fancifulness, and often felicitous with a chance felicity. He is fascinated by our seventeenth-century singers, and has, here and there, succeeded in catching something of their quaintness and not a little of their charm. There is a pleasant flavour about his verse. It is entirely free from violence and from vagueness, those two besetting sins of so much modern poetry. It is clear in outline and restrained in form, and, at its best, has much that is light and lovely about it. How graceful, for instance, this is!

BARE FEET

O fair white feet ! O dawn-white feet
Of Her my hope may claim !
Bare-footed through the dew she came
Her Love to meet.

THE POETS' CORNER

Star-glancing feet, the windflowers sweet
Might envy, without shame,
As through the grass they lightly came.
Her Love to meet.

O Maiden sweet, with flower-kiss'd feet!
My heart your footstool name!
Bare-footed through the dew she came,
Her Love to meet.

'Vindicate Gemma!' was Longfellow's advice to Miss Héloïse Durant when she proposed to write a play about Dante. Longfellow, it may be remarked, was always on the side of domesticity. It was the secret of his popularity. We cannot say, however, that Miss Durant has made us like Gemma better. She is not exactly the Xantippe whom Boccaccio describes, but she is very boring, for all that:

GEMMA. The more thou meditat'st, more mad art thou.
Clowns, with their love, can cheer poor wives' hearts more
O'er black bread and goat's cheese than thou canst mine
O'er red Vernaccia, spite of all thy learning!
Care I how tortured spirits feel in hell?

DANTE. Thou tortur'st mine.

GEMMA.

DANTE. Would I were there.

GEMMA.

DANTE. Thou canst not understand the mandates given
To poets by their goddess Poesy. . . .

GEMMA. Canst ne'er speak prose? Why daily clothe thy thoughts
In strangest garb, as if thy wits played fool
At masquerade, where no man knows a maid
From matron? Fie on poets' mutterings!

DANTE (to himself). If, then, the soul absorbed at last to whole—

GEMMA. Fie! fie! I say. Art thou bewitched?

DANTE.

GEMMA. Dost thou deem me deaf and dumb?

DANTE.

O! peace.

O! that thou wert.

Dante is certainly rude, but Gemma is dreadful. The play is well meant but it is lumbering and heavy, and the blank verse has absolutely no merit.

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Father O'Flynn and Other Irish Lyrics, by Mr. A. P. Graves, is a collection of poems in the style of Lover. Most of them are written in dialect, and, for the benefit of English readers, notes are appended in which the uninitiated are informed that 'brogue' means a boot, that 'mavourneen' means my dear, and that 'astore' is a term of affection. Here is a specimen of Mr. Graves's work :

' Have you e'er a new song,
My Limerick Poet,
To help us along
Wid this terrible boat,
Away over to Tork ? '
' Arrah I understand ;
For all of your work,
'Twill tighten you, boys,
To cargo that sand
To the overside strand,
Wid the current so strong
Unless you've a song—

A song to lighten and brighten you, boys. . . . '

It is a very dreary production and does not 'lighten and brighten' us a bit. The whole volume should be called *The Lucubrations of a Stage Irishman*.

The anonymous author of *The Judgment of the City* is a sort of bad Blake. So at least his prelude seems to suggest :

Time, the old viol-player,
For ever thrills his ancient strings
With the flying bow of Fate, and thence
Much discord, but some music, brings.

His ancient strings are truth,
Love, hate, hope, fear ;
And his choicest melody
Is the song of the faithful seer.

As he progresses, however, he develops into a

MR. SWINBURNE'S LAST VOLUME

kind of inferior Clough and writes heavy hexameters upon modern subjects :

Here for a moment stands in the light at the door of a playhouse,
One who is dignified, masterly, hard in the pride of his station ;
Here too, the stateliest of matrons, sour in the pride of her station ;

With them their daughter, sad-faced and listless, half-crushed to their likeness.

He has every form of sincerity except the sincerity of the artist, a defect that he shares with most of our popular writers.

(1) *Love's Widonhood and Other Poems.* By Alfred Austin. (Macmillan and Co.)

(2) *Poems and Translations.* By W. J. Linton. (Nimmo.)

(3) *Dante : a Dramatic Poem.* By Héloïse Durant. (Kegan Paul.)

(4) *Father O'Flynn and Other Irish Lyrics.* By A. P. Graves. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

(5) *The Judgment of the City and Other Poems.* (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

MR. SWINBURNE'S LAST VOLUME

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 27, 1889.)

MR. SWINBURNE once set his age on fire by a volume of very perfect and very poisonous poetry. Then he became revolutionary and pantheistic, and cried out against those that sit in high places both in heaven and on earth. Then he invented Marie Stuart and laid upon us the heavy burden of *Bothwell*. Then he retired to the nursery and wrote poems about children of a somewhat over-subtle character. He is now extremely patriotic, and manages to combine with his patriotism a strong affection for the Tory party. He has always been a great poet. But he has his limita-

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tions, the chief of which is, curiously enough, the entire lack of any sense of limit. His song is nearly always too loud for his subject. His magnificent rhetoric, nowhere more magnificent than in the volume that now lies before us, conceals rather than reveals. It has been said of him, and with truth, that he is a master of language, but with still greater truth it may be said that Language is his master. Words seem to dominate him. Alliteration tyrannises over him. Mere sound often becomes his lord. He is so eloquent that whatever he touches becomes unreal.

Let us turn to the poem on the Armada :

The wings of the south-west wind are widened ; the breath of his
fervent lips,
More keen than a sword's edge, fiercer than fire, falls full on the
plunging ships.
The pilot is he of the northward flight, their stay and their steers-
man he ;
A helmsman clothed with the tempest, and girdled with strength
to constrain the sea.
And the host of them trembles and quails, caught fast in his hand
as a bird in the toils ;
For the wrath and the joy that fulfil him are mightier than man's,
whom he slays and spoils.
And vainly, with heart divided in sunder, and labour of wavering will,
The lord of their host takes counsel with hope if haply their star
shine still.

Somehow we seem to have heard all this before. Does it come from the fact that of all the poets who ever lived Mr. Swinburne is the one who is the most limited in imagery ? It must be admitted that he is so. He has wearied us with his monotony. ' Fire ' and the ' Sea ' are the two words ever on his lips. We must confess also that this shrill singing—marvellous as it is—leaves us out of breath. Here is a

MR. SWINBURNE'S LAST VOLUME

passage from a poem called *A Word with the Wind*:

Be the sunshine bared or veiled, the sky superb or shrouded,
Still the waters, lax and languid, chafed and foiled,
Keen and thwarted, pale and patient, clothed with fire or clouded,
Vex their heart in vain, or sleep like serpents coiled.
Thee they look for, blind and baffled, wan with wrath and weary,
Blown for ever back by winds that rock the bird:
Winds that seamews breast subdue the sea, and bid the dreary
Waves be weak as hearts made sick with hope deferred.
Let the clarion sound from westward, let the south bear token
How the glories of thy godhead sound and shine:
Bid the land rejoice to see the land-wind's broad wings broken,
Bid the sea take comfort, bid the world be thine.

Verse of this kind may be justly praised for the sustained strength and vigour of its metrical scheme. Its purely technical excellence is extraordinary. But is it more than an oratorical *tour de force*? Does it really convey much? Does it charm? Could we return to it again and again with renewed pleasure? We think not. It seems to us empty.

Of course, we must not look to these poems for any revelation of human life. To be at one with the elements seems to be Mr. Swinburne's aim. He seeks to speak with the breath of wind and wave. The roar of the fire is ever in his ears. He puts his clarion to the lips of Spring and bids her blow, and the Earth wakes from her dreams and tells him her secret. He is the first lyric poet who has tried to make an absolute surrender of his own personality, and he has succeeded. We hear the song, but we never know the singer. We never even get near to him. Out of the thunder and splendour of words he himself says nothing. We have often had man's interpretation of Nature; now we have Nature's interpretation of man, and she has curiously little to

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say. Force and Freedom form her vague message. She deafens us with her clangours.

But Mr. Swinburne is not always riding the whirlwind and calling out of the depths of the sea. Romantic ballads in Border dialect have not lost their fascination for him, and this last volume contains some very splendid examples of this curious artificial kind of poetry. The amount of pleasure one gets out of dialect is a matter entirely of temperament. To say 'mither' instead of 'mother' seems to many the acme of romance. There are others who are not quite so ready to believe in the pathos of provincialisms. There is, however, no doubt of Mr. Swinburne's mastery over the form, whether the form be quite legitimate or not. *The Weary Wedding* has the concentration and colour of a great drama, and the quaintness of its style lends it something of the power of a grotesque. The ballad of *The Witch-Mother*, a mediæval Medea who slays her children because her lord is faithless, is worth reading on account of its horrible simplicity. *The Bride's Tragedy*, with its strange refrain of

In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin :

The Jacobite's Exile—

O lordly flow the Loire and Seine,
And loud the dark Durance :
But bonnier shine the braes of Tyne
Than a' the fields of France ;
And the waves of Till that speak sae still
Gleam goodlier where they glance :

The Tyneside Widow and *A Reiver's Neck-verse* are all poems of fine imaginative power, and some of them are terrible in their fierce intensity of passion. There is no danger of English poetry narrowing

THREE NEW POETS

itself to a form so limited as the romantic ballad in dialect. It is of too vital a growth for that. So we may welcome Mr. Swinburne's masterly experiments with the hope that things which are inimitable will not be imitated. The collection is completed by a few poems on children, some sonnets, a threnody on John William Inchbold, and a lovely lyric entitled *The Interpreters*.

In human thought have all things habitation;
Our days
Laugh, lower, and lighten past, and find no station
That stays.

But thought and faith are mightier things than time
Can wrong,
Made splendid once by speech, or made sublime
By song.

Remembrance, though the tide of change that rolls
Wax hoary,
Gives earth and heaven, for song's sake and the soul's,
Their glory.

Certainly, 'for song's sake' we should love Mr. Swinburne's work, cannot, indeed, help loving it, so marvellous a music-maker is he. But what of the soul? For the soul we must go elsewhere.

Poems and Ballads. Third Series. By Algernon Charles Swinburne. (Chatto and Windus.)

THREE NEW POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, July 12, 1889.)

BOOKS of poetry by young writers are usually promissory notes that are never met. Now and then, however, one comes across a volume that is so far above the average that one can hardly

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resist the fascinating temptation of recklessly prophesying a fine future for its author. Such a book Mr. Yeats's *Wanderings of Oisín* certainly is. Here we find nobility of treatment and nobility of subject-matter, delicacy of poetic instinct and richness of imaginative resource. Unequal and uneven much of the work must be admitted to be. Mr. Yeats does not try to 'out-baby' Wordsworth, we are glad to say; but he occasionally succeeds in 'out-glittering' Keats, and, here and there, in his book we come across strange crudities and irritating conceits. But when he is at his best he is very good. If he has not the grand simplicity of epic treatment, he has at least something of the largeness of vision that belongs to the epical temper. He does not rob of their stature the great heroes of Celtic mythology. He is very naïve and very primitive and speaks of his giants with the air of a child. Here is a characteristic passage from the account of Oisín's return from the Island of Forgetfulness:

And I rode by the plains of the sea's edge, where all is barren and grey,

Grey sands on the green of the grasses and over the dripping trees,
Dripping and doubling landward, as though they would hasten away
Like an army of old men longing for rest from the moan of the seas.

Long fled the foam-flakes around me, the winds fled out of the vast,
Snatching the bird in secret, nor knew I, embosomed apart,
When they froze the cloth on my body like armour riveted fast,
For Remembrance, lifting her leanness, keened in the gates of my heart.

Till fattening the winds of the morning, an odour of new-mown hay
Came, and my forehead fell low, and my tears like berries fell
down;

Later a sound came, half lost in the sound of a shore far away,
From the great grass-barnacle calling, and later the shore-winds
brown.

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If I were as I once was, the gold hooves crushing the sand and
the shells,
Coming forth from the sea like the morning with red lips murmur-
ing a song,
Not coughing, my head on my knees, and praying, and wroth with
the bells,
I would leave no Saint's head on his body, though spacious his
lands were and strong.

Making way from the kindling surges, I rode on a bridle-path,
Much wondering to see upon all hands, of wattle and woodwork
made,
Thy bell-mounted churches, and guardless the sacred cairn and
the earth,
And a small and feeble populace stooping with mattock and spade.

In one or two places the music is faulty, the con-
struction is sometimes too involved, and the word
'populace' in the last line is rather infelicitous; but,
when all is said, it is impossible not to feel in these
stanzas the presence of the true poetic spirit.

A young lady who seeks for a 'song surpassing
sense,' and tries to reproduce Mr. Browning's mode
of verse for our edification, may seem to be in a
somewhat parlous state. But Miss Caroline Fitz
Gerald's work is better than her aim. *Venetia Vic-
trix* is in many respects a fine poem. It shows
vigour, intellectual strength, and courage. The story
is a strange one. A certain Venetian, hating one of
the Ten who had wronged him and identifying his
enemy with Venice herself, abandons his native city
and makes a vow that, rather than lift a hand for
her good, he will give his soul to Hell. As he is
sailing down the Adriatic at night, his ship is sud-
denly becalmed and he sees a huge galley

where sate
Like counsellors on high, exempt, elate,
The fiends triumphant in their fiery state,

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on their way to Venice. He has to choose between his own ruin and the ruin of his city. After a struggle, he determines to sacrifice himself to his rash oath.

I climbed aloft. My brain had grown one thought,
One hope, one purpose. And I heard the hiss
Of raging disappointment, loth to miss
Its prey—I heard the lapping of the flame,
That through the blenchèd figures went and came,
Darting in frenzy to the devils' yell.
I set that cross on high, and cried: 'To hell
My soul for ever, and my deed to God!
Once Venice guarded safe, let this vile clod
Drift where fate will!'

And then (the hideous laugh
Of fiends in full possession, keen to quaff
The wine of one new soul not weak with tears,
Pealing like ruinous thunder in mine ears)
I fell, and heard no more. The pale day broke
Through lazar-windows, when once more I woke,
Remembering I might no more dare to pray.

Venetia Victrix is followed by *Ophelion*, a curious lyrical play whose *dramatis personæ* consist of Night, Death, Dawn and a Scholar. It is intricate rather than musical, but some of the songs are graceful—notably one beginning

Lady of heaven most pure and holy,
Artemis, fleet as the flying deer,
Glide through the dusk like a silver shadow,
Mirror thy brow in the lonely mere.

Miss FitzGerald's volume is certainly worth reading. Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's little book, *Volumes in Folio* as he quaintly calls it, is full of dainty verse and delicate fancy. Lines such as

And lo! the white face of the dawn
Yearned like a ghost's against the pane,
A sobbing ghost amid the rain;
Or like a chill and pallid rose
Slowly upclimbing from the lawn,

THREE NEW POETS

strike, with their fantastic choice of metaphors, a pleasing note. At present Mr. Le Gallienne's muse seems to devote herself entirely to the worship of books, and Mr. Le Gallienne himself is steeped in literary traditions, making Keats his model and seeking to reproduce something of Keats's richness and affluence of imagery. He is keenly conscious how derivative his inspiration is :

Verse of my own ! why ask so poor a thing,
When I might gather from the garden-ways
Of sunny memory fragrant offering
Of deathless blooms and white unwithering sprays ?

Shakespeare had given me an English rose,
And honeysuckle Spenser sweet as dew,
Or I had brought you from that dreamy close
Keats' passion-blossom, or the mystic blue

Star-flower of Shelley's song, or shaken gold
From lilies of the Blessed Damosel,
Or stolen fire from out the scarlet fold
Of Swinburne's poppies. . . .

Yet now that he has played his prelude with so sensitive and so graceful a touch, we have no doubt that he will pass to larger themes and nobler subject-matter, and fulfil the hope he expresses in this sextet :

For if perchance some music should be mine,
I would fling forth its notes like a fierce sea,
To wash away the piles of tyranny,
To make love free and faith unbound of creed.
For some power to fill my shrunken line,
And make a trumpet of my oaten reed.

(1) *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*. By W. B. Yeats. (Kegan Paul.)

(2) *Venetia Victrix*. By Caroline Fitz Gerald. (Macmillan and Co.)

(3) *Volumes in Folio*. By Richard Le Gallienne. (Elkin Mathews.)

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A CHINESE SAGE

(*Speaker*, February 8, 1890.)

An eminent Oxford theologian once remarked that his only objection to modern progress was that it progressed forward instead of backward—a view that so fascinated a certain artistic undergraduate that he promptly wrote an essay upon some unnoticed analogies between the development of ideas and the movements of the common sea-crab. I feel sure the *Speaker* will not be suspected even by its most enthusiastic friends of holding this dangerous heresy of retrogression. But I must candidly admit that I have come to the conclusion that the most caustic criticism of modern life I have met with for some time is that contained in the writings of the learned Chuang Tzū, recently translated into the vulgar tongue by Mr. Herbert Giles, Her Majesty's Consul at Tamsui.

The spread of popular education has no doubt made the name of this great thinker quite familiar to the general public, but, for the sake of the few and the over-cultured, I feel it my duty to state definitely who he was, and to give a brief outline of the character of his philosophy.

Chuang Tzū, whose name must carefully be pronounced as it is not written, was born in the fourth century before Christ, by the banks of the Yellow River, in the Flowery Land; and portraits of the wonderful sage seated on the flying dragon of contemplation may still be found on the simple tea-trays and pleasing screens of many of our most respectable suburban households. The honest ratepayer and his healthy family have no doubt often mocked at the dome-like forehead of the

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philosopher, and laughed over the strange perspective of the landscape that lies beneath him. If they really knew who he was, they would tremble. For Chuang Tzū spent his life in reaching the great creed of Inaction, and in pointing out the uselessness of all useful things. 'Do nothing, and everything will be done,' was the doctrine which he inherited from his great master Lao Tzū. To resolve action into thought, and thought into abstraction, was his wicked transcendental aim. Like the obscure philosopher of early Greek speculation, he believed in the identity of contraries; like Plato, he was an idealist, and had all the idealist's contempt for utilitarian systems; he was a mystic like Dionysius, and Scotus Erigena, and Jacob Böhme, and held, with them and with Philo, that the object of life was to get rid of self-consciousness, and to become the unconscious vehicle of a higher illumination. In fact, Chuang Tzū may be said to have summed up in himself almost every mood of European metaphysical or mystical thought, from Heraclitus down to Hegel. There was something in him of the Quietist also; and in his worship of Nothing he may be said to have in some measure anticipated those strange dreamers of mediæval days who, like Tauler and Master Eckhart, adored the *purum nihil* and the Abyss. The great middle classes of this country, to whom, as we all know, our prosperity, if not our civilisation, is entirely due, may shrug their shoulders over all this and ask, with a certain amount of reason, what is the identity of contraries to them, and why they should get rid of that self-consciousness which is their chief characteristic. But Chuang Tzū was something more than a metaphysician and an illuminist. He

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sought to destroy society, as we know it, as the middle classes know it; and the sad thing is that he combines with the passionate eloquence of a Rousseau the scientific reasoning of a Herbert Spencer. There is nothing of the sentimentalist in him. He pities the rich more than the poor, if he ever pities at all, and prosperity seems to him as tragic a thing as suffering. He has nothing of the modern sympathy with failures, nor does he propose that the prizes should always be given on moral grounds to those who come in last in the race. It is the race itself that he objects to; and as for active sympathy, which has become the profession of so many worthy people in our own day, he thinks that trying to make others good is as silly an occupation as 'beating a drum in a forest in order to find a fugitive.' It is a mere waste of energy. That is all. While, as for a thoroughly sympathetic man, he is, in the eyes of Chuang Tzŭ, simply a man who is always trying to be somebody else, and so misses the only possible excuse for his own existence.

Yes; incredible as it may seem, this curious thinker looked back with a sigh of regret to a certain Golden Age when there were no competitive examinations, no wearisome educational systems, no missionaries, no penny dinners for the people, no Established Churches, no Humanitarian Societies, no dull lectures about one's duty to one's neighbour, and no tedious sermons about any subject at all. In those ideal days, he tells us, people loved each other without being conscious of charity, or writing to the newspapers about it. They were upright, and yet they never published books upon Altruism. As every man kept his knowledge to himself, the world escaped the curse of scepticism; and as every man

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kept his virtues to himself, nobody meddled in other people's business. They lived simple and peaceful lives, and were contented with such food and raiment as they could get. Neighbouring districts were in sight, and 'the cocks and dogs of one could be heard in the other,' yet the people grew old and died without ever interchanging visits. There was no chattering about clever men, and no laudation of good men. The intolerable sense of obligation was unknown. The deeds of humanity left no trace, and their affairs were not made a burden for posterity by foolish historians.

In an evil moment the Philanthropist made his appearance, and brought with him the mischievous idea of Government. 'There is such a thing,' says Chuang Tzŭ, 'as leaving mankind alone: there has never been such a thing as governing mankind.' All modes of government are wrong. They are unscientific, because they seek to alter the natural environment of man; they are immoral because, by interfering with the individual, they produce the most aggressive forms of egotism; they are ignorant, because they try to spread education; they are self-destructive, because they engender anarchy. 'Of old,' he tells us, 'the Yellow Emperor first caused charity and duty to one's neighbour to interfere with the natural goodness of the heart of man. In consequence of this, Yao and Shun wore the hair off their legs in endeavouring to feed their people. They disturbed their internal economy in order to find room for artificial virtues. They exhausted their energies in framing laws, and they were failures.' Man's heart, our philosopher goes on to say, may be 'forced down or stirred up,' and in either case the issue is fatal. Yao made the people

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too happy, so they were not satisfied. Chieh made them too wretched, so they grew discontented. Then every one began to argue about the best way of tinkering up society. 'It is quite clear that something must be done,' they said to each other, and there was a general rush for knowledge. The results were so dreadful that the Government of the day had to bring in Coercion, and as a consequence of this 'virtuous men sought refuge in mountain caves, while rulers of state sat trembling in ancestral halls.' Then, when everything was in a state of perfect chaos, the Social Reformers got up on platforms, and preached salvation from the ills that they and their system had caused. The poor Social Reformers! 'They know not shame, nor what it is to blush,' is the verdict of Chuang Tzū upon them.

The economic question, also, is discussed by this almond-eyed sage at great length, and he writes about the curse of capital as eloquently as Mr. Hyndman. The accumulation of wealth is to him the origin of evil. It makes the strong violent, and the weak dishonest. It creates the petty thief, and puts him in a bamboo cage. It creates the big thief, and sets him on a throne of white jade. It is the father of competition, and competition is the waste, as well as the destruction, of energy. The order of nature is rest, repetition, and peace. Weariness and war are the results of an artificial society based upon capital; and the richer this society gets, the more thoroughly bankrupt it really is, for it has neither sufficient rewards for the good nor sufficient punishments for the wicked. There is also this to be remembered—that the prizes of the world degrade a man as much as the world's punishments. The

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age is rotten with its worship of success. As for education, true wisdom can neither be learnt nor taught. It is a spiritual state, to which he who lives in harmony with nature attains. Knowledge is shallow if we compare it with the extent of the unknown, and only the unknowable is of value. Society produces rogues, and education makes one rogue cleverer than another. That is the only result of School Boards. Besides, of what possible philosophic importance can education be, when it serves simply to make each man differ from his neighbour? We arrive ultimately at a chaos of opinions, doubt everything, and fall into the vulgar habit of arguing; and it is only the intellectually lost who ever argue. Look at Hui Tzu. 'He was a man of many ideas. His works would fill five carts. But his doctrines were paradoxical.' He said that there were feathers in an egg, because there were feathers on a chicken; that a dog could be a sheep, because all names were arbitrary; that there was a moment when a swiftly-flying arrow was neither moving nor at rest; that if you took a stick a foot long, and cut it in half every day, you would never come to the end of it; and that a bay horse and a dun cow were three, because taken separately they were two, and taken together they were one, and one and two made up three. 'He was like a man running a race with his own shadow, and making a noise in order to drown the echo. He was a clever gadfly, that was all. What was the use of him?'

Morality is, of course, a different thing. It went out of fashion, says Chuang Tzū, when people began to moralise. Men ceased then to be spontaneous and to act on intuition. They became priggish

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and artificial, and were so blind as to have a definite purpose in life. Then came Governments and Philanthropists, those two pests of the age. The former tried to coerce people into being good, and so destroyed the natural goodness of man. The latter were a set of aggressive busybodies who caused confusion wherever they went. They were stupid enough to have principles, and unfortunate enough to act up to them. They all came to bad ends, and showed that universal altruism is as bad in its results as universal egotism. They 'tripped people up over charity, and fettered them with duties to their neighbours.' They gushed over music, and fussed over ceremonies. As a consequence of all this, the world lost its equilibrium, and has been staggering ever since.

Who, then, according to Chuang Tzū, is the perfect man? And what is his manner of life? The perfect man does nothing beyond gazing at the universe. He adopts no absolute position. 'In motion, he is like water. At rest, he is like a mirror. And, like Echo, he answers only when he is called upon.' He lets externals take care of themselves. Nothing material injures him; nothing spiritual punishes him. His mental equilibrium gives him the empire of the world. He is never the slave of objective existences. He knows that, 'just as the best language is that which is never spoken, so the best action is that which is never done.' He is passive, and accepts the laws of life. He rests in inactivity, and sees the world become virtuous of itself. He does not try to 'bring about his own good deeds.' He never wastes himself on effort. He is not troubled about moral distinctions. He knows that things are what they are, and that

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their consequences will be what they will be. His mind is the 'speculum of creation,' and he is ever at peace.

All this is of course excessively dangerous, but we must remember that Chuang Tzū lived more than two thousand years ago, and never had the opportunity of seeing our unrivalled civilisation. And yet it is possible that, were he to come back to earth and visit us, he might have something to say to Mr. Balfour about his coercion and active misgovernment in Ireland; he might smile at some of our philanthropic ardours, and shake his head over many of our organised charities; the School Board might not impress him, nor our race for wealth stir his admiration; he might wonder at our ideals, and grow sad over what we have realised. Perhaps it is well that Chuang Tzū cannot return.

Meanwhile, thanks to Mr. Giles and Mr. Quaritch, we have his book to console us, and certainly it is a most fascinating and delightful volume. Chuang Tzū is one of the Darwinians before Darwin. He traces man from the germ, and sees his unity with nature. As an anthropologist he is excessively interesting, and he describes our primitive arboreal ancestor living in trees through his terror of animals stronger than himself, and knowing only one parent, the mother, with all the accuracy of a lecturer at the Royal Society. Like Plato, he adopts the dialogue as his mode of expression, 'putting words into other people's mouths,' he tells us, 'in order to gain breadth of view.' As a story-teller he is charming. The account of the visit of the respectable Confucius to the great Robber Chê is most vivid and brilliant, and it is impossible not to laugh over the ultimate dis-

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comfiture of the sage, the barrenness of whose moral platitudes is ruthlessly exposed by the successful brigand. Even in his metaphysics, Chuang Tzū is intensely humorous. He personifies his abstractions, and makes them act plays before us. The Spirit of the Clouds, when passing eastward through the expanse of air, happened to fall in with the Vital Principle. The latter was slapping his ribs and hopping about: whereupon the Spirit of the Clouds said, 'Who are you, old man, and what are you doing?' 'Strolling!' replied the Vital Principle, without stopping, for all activities are ceaseless. 'I want to *know* something,' continued the Spirit of the Clouds. 'Ah!' cried the Vital Principle, in a tone of disapprobation, and a marvellous conversation follows, that is not unlike the dialogue between the Sphinx and the Chimera in Flaubert's curious drama. Talking animals, also, have their place in Chuang Tzū's parables and stories, and through myth and poetry and fancy his strange philosophy finds musical utterance.

Of course it is sad to be told that it is immoral to be consciously good, and that doing anything is the worst form of idleness. Thousands of excellent and really earnest philanthropists would be absolutely thrown upon the rates if we adopted the view that nobody should be allowed to meddle in what does not concern him. The doctrine of the uselessness of all useful things would not merely endanger our commercial supremacy as a nation, but might bring discredit upon many prosperous and serious-minded members of the shop-keeping classes. What would become of our popular preachers, our Exeter Hall orators, our drawing-room evangelists, if we said to them, in the words of Chuang Tzū,

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'Mosquitoes will keep a man awake all night with their biting, and just in the same way this talk of charity and duty to one's neighbour drives us nearly crazy. Sirs, strive to keep the world to its own original simplicity, and, as the wind bloweth where it listeth, so let Virtue establish itself. Wherefore this undue energy?' And what would be the fate of governments and professional politicians if we came to the conclusion that there is no such thing as governing mankind at all? It is clear that Chuang Tzū is a very dangerous writer, and the publication of his book in English, two thousand years after his death, is obviously premature, and may cause a great deal of pain to many thoroughly respectable and industrious persons. It may be true that the ideal of self-culture and self-development, which is the aim of his scheme of life, and the basis of his scheme of philosophy, is an ideal somewhat needed by an age like ours, in which most people are so anxious to educate their neighbours that they have actually no time left in which to educate themselves. But would it be wise to say so? It seems to me that if we once admitted the force of any one of Chuang Tzū's destructive criticisms we should have to put some check on our national habit of self-glorification; and the only thing that ever consoles men for the stupid things he does is the praise he always gives himself for doing them. There may, however, be a few who have grown wearied of that strange modern tendency that sets enthusiasm to do the work of the intellect. To these, and such as these, Chuang Tzū will be welcome. But let them only read him. Let them not talk about him. He would be disturbing at dinner-parties, and impossible at afternoon teas, and

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his whole life was a protest against platform speaking. 'The perfect man ignores self; the divine man ignores action; the true sage ignores reputation.' These are the principles of Chuang Tzū.

Chuang Tzū: Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer. Translated from the Chinese by Herbert A. Giles, H.B.M.'s Consul at Tamsui. (Bernard Quaritch.)

MR. PATER'S LAST VOLUME

(*Speaker*, March 22, 1890.)

WHEN I first had the privilege—and I count it a very high one—of meeting Mr. Walter Pater, he said to me, smiling, 'Why do you always write poetry? Why do you not write prose? Prose is so much more difficult.'

It was during my undergraduate days at Oxford: days of lyrical ardour and of studious sonnet-writing; days when one loved the exquisite intricacy and musical repetitions of the ballade, and the villanelle with its linked long-drawn echoes and its curious completeness; days when one solemnly sought to discover the proper temper in which a triolet should be written; delightful days, in which, I am glad to say, there was far more rhyme than reason.

I may frankly confess now that at the time I did not quite comprehend what Mr. Pater really meant; and it was not till I had carefully studied his beautiful and suggestive essays on the Renaissance that I fully realised what a wonderful self-conscious art the art of English prose-writing really is, or may be made to be. Carlyle's stormy rhetoric, Ruskin's winged and passionate eloquence, had seemed to me

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to spring from enthusiasm rather than from art. I do not think I knew then that even prophets correct their proofs. As for Jacobean prose, I thought it too exuberant; and Queen Anne prose appeared to me terribly bald, and irritatingly rational. But Mr. Pater's essays became to me 'the golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty.' They are still this to me. It is possible, of course, that I may exaggerate about them. I certainly hope that I do; for where there is no exaggeration there is no love, and where there is no love there is no understanding. It is only about things that do not interest one, that one can give a really unbiassed opinion; and this is no doubt the reason why an unbiassed opinion is always valueless.

But I must not allow this brief notice of Mr. Pater's new volume to degenerate into an autobiography. I remember being told in America that whenever Margaret Fuller wrote an essay upon Emerson the printers had always to send out to borrow some additional capital 'I's,' and I feel it right to accept this transatlantic warning.

Appreciations, in the fine Latin sense of the word, is the title given by Mr. Pater to his book, which is an exquisite collection of exquisite essays, of delicately wrought works of art—some of them being almost Greek in their purity of outline and perfection of form, others mediæval in their strangeness of colour and passionate suggestion, and all of them absolutely modern, in the true meaning of the term modernity. For he to whom the present is the only thing that is present, knows nothing of the age in which he lives. To realise the nineteenth century one must realise every century that has preceded it, and that has contributed to its making. To know

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anything about oneself, one must know all about others. There must be no mood with which one cannot sympathise, no dead mode of life that one cannot make alive. The legacies of heredity may make us alter our views of moral responsibility, but they cannot but intensify our sense of the value of Criticism; for the true critic is he who bears within himself the dreams and ideas and feelings of myriad generations, and to whom no form of thought is alien, no emotional impulse obscure.

Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the least successful, of the essays contained in the present volume is that on *Style*. It is the most interesting because it is the work of one who speaks with the high authority that comes from the noble realisation of things nobly conceived. It is the least successful, because the subject is too abstract. A true artist like Mr. Pater is most felicitous when he deals with the concrete, whose very limitations give him finer freedom, while they necessitate more intense vision. And yet what a high ideal is contained in these few pages! How good it is for us, in these days of popular education and facile journalism, to be reminded of the real scholarship that is essential to the perfect writer, who, 'being a true lover of words for their own sake, a minute and constant observer of their physiognomy,' will avoid what is mere rhetoric, or ostentatious ornament, or negligent misuse of terms, or ineffective surplusage, and will be known by his tact of omission, by his skilful economy of means, by his selection and self-restraint, and perhaps above all by that conscious artistic structure which is the expression of mind in style. I think I have been wrong in saying that the subject is too abstract. In Mr. Pater's hands it

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becomes very real to us indeed, and he shows us how, behind the perfection of a man's style, must lie the passion of a man's soul.

As one passes to the rest of the volume, one finds essays on Wordsworth and on Coleridge, on Charles Lamb and on Sir Thomas Browne, on some of Shakespeare's plays and on the English kings that Shakespeare fashioned, on Dante Rossetti, and on William Morris. As that on Wordsworth seems to be Mr. Pater's last work, so that on the singer of the *Defence of Guenevere* is certainly his earliest, or almost his earliest, and it is interesting to mark the change that has taken place in his style. This change is, perhaps, at first sight not very apparent. In 1868 we find Mr. Pater writing with the same exquisite care for words, with the same studied music, with the same temper, and something of the same mode of treatment. But, as he goes on, the architecture of the style becomes richer and more complex, the epithet more precise and intellectual. Occasionally one may be inclined to think that there is, here and there, a sentence which is somewhat long, and possibly, if one may venture to say so, a little heavy and cumbersome in movement. But if this be so, it comes from those side-issues suddenly suggested by the idea in its progress, and really revealing the idea more perfectly; or from those felicitous after-thoughts that give a fuller completeness to the central scheme, and yet convey something of the charm of chance; or from a desire to suggest the secondary shades of meaning with all their accumulating effect, and to avoid, it may be, the violence and harshness of too definite and exclusive an opinion. For in matters of art, at any rate, thought is inevitably coloured by emotion, and so is

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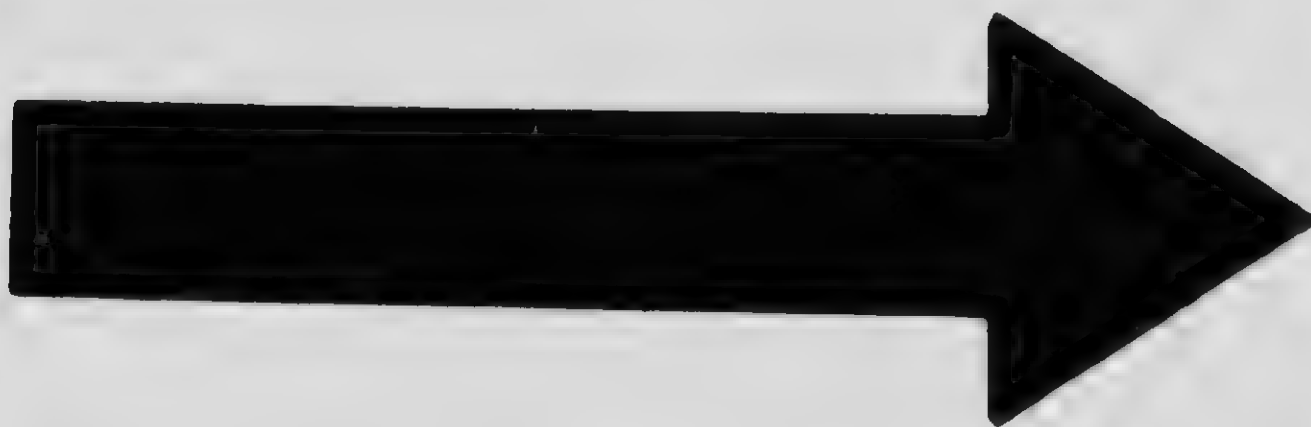
fluid rather than fixed, and, recognising its dependence upon moods and upon the passion of fine moments, will not accept the rigidity of a scientific formula or a theological dogma. The critical pleasure, too, that we receive from tracing, through what may seem the intricacies of a sentence, the working of the constructive intelligence, must not be overlooked. As soon as we have realised the design, everything appears clear and simple. After a time, these long sentences of Mr. Pater's come to have the charm of an elaborate piece of music, and the unity of such music also.

I have suggested that the essay on Wordsworth is probably the most recent bit of work contained in this volume. If one might choose between so much that is good, I should be inclined to say it is the finest also. The essay on Lamb is curiously suggestive; suggestive, indeed, of a somewhat more tragic, more sombre figure, than men have been wont to think of in connection with the author of the *Essays of Elia*. It is an interesting aspect under which to regard Lamb, but perhaps he himself would have had some difficulty in recognising the portrait given of him. He had, undoubtedly, great sorrows, or motives for sorrow, but he could console himself at a moment's notice for the real tragedies of life by reading any one of the Elizabethan tragedies, provided it was in a folio edition. The essay on Sir Thomas Browne is delightful, and has the strange, personal, fanciful charm of the author of the *Religio Medici*, Mr. Pater often catching the colour and accent and tone of whatever artist, or work of art, he deals with. That on Coleridge, with its insistence on the necessity of the cultivation of the relative, as opposed to the absolute spirit in

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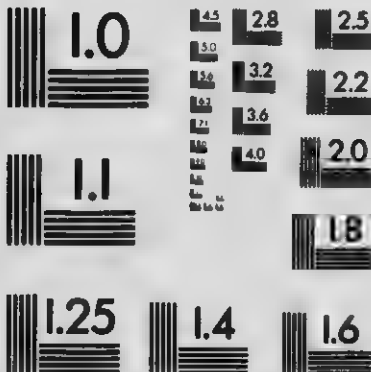
philosophy and in ethics, and its high appreciation of the poet's true position in our literature, is in style and substance a very blameless work. Grace of expression and delicate subtlety of thought and phrase, characterise the essays on Shakespeare. But the essay on Wordsworth has a spiritual beauty of its own. It appeals, not to the ordinary Wordsworthian with his uncritical temper, and his gross confusion of ethical and æsthetical problems, but rather to those who desire to separate the gold from the dross, and to reach at the true Wordsworth through the mass of tedious and prosaic work that bears his name, and that serves often to conceal him from us. The presence of an alien element in Wordsworth's art is, of course, recognised by Mr. Pater, but he touches on it merely from the psychological point of view, pointing out how this quality of higher and lower moods gives the effect in his poetry 'of a power not altogether his own, or under his control'; a power which comes and goes when it wills, 'so that the old fancy which made the poet's art an enthusiasm, a form of divine possession, seems almost true of him.' Mr. Pater's earlier essays had their *purpurei panni*, so eminently suitable for quotation, such as the famous passage on *Mona Lisa*, and that other in which Botticelli's strange conception of the Virgin is so strangely set forth. From the present volume it is difficult to select any one passage in preference to another as specially characteristic of Mr. Pater's treatment. This, however, is worth quoting at length. It contains a truth eminently suitable for our age:

That the end of life is not action but contemplation—*being* as distinct from *doing*—a certain disposition of the mind: is, in some shape or other, the principle of all the higher morality.



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In poetry, in art, if you enter into their true spirit at all, you touch this principle in a measure; these, by their sterility, are a type of beholding for the mere joy of beholding. To treat life in the spirit of art is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified: to encourage such treatment is to ignore the true moral significance of art and poetry. Wordsworth and other poets who have been like him in ancient or modern recent times, are the masters, the experts, in this art of impersonal contemplation. Their work is not to teach lessons, to enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends, but to withdraw the thoughts for a while from the mere machinery of life, to fix them, with appropriate emotions, on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects—'on the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature'—on 'the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe, on storm and sunshine, on revolutions of the seasons, on cold and heat, on loss of friends and kindred, on injuries and resentments, on gratitude and hope, on fear and sorrow.' To witness this spectacle with appropriate emotions is the aim of all culture; and of these emotions poetry like Wordsworth's is a great nourisher and stimulant. He sees nature full of sentiment and excitement; he sees men and women as parts of nature, passionate, excited, in strange grouping and connection with the grandeur and beauty of the natural world:—images, in his own words, of men suffering, amid awful forms and powers.'

Certainly the real secret of Wordsworth has never been better expressed. After having read and reread Mr. Pater's essay—for it requires re-reading—one returns to the poet's work with a new sense of joy and wonder, and with something of eager and impassioned expectation. And perhaps this might be roughly taken as the test or touchstone of the finest criticism.

Finally, one cannot help noticing the delicate instinct that has gone to fashion the brief epilogue that ends this delightful volume. The difference

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between the classical and romantic spirits in art has often, and with much over-emphasis, been discussed. But with what a light sure touch does Mr. Pater write of it! How subtle and certain are his distinctions! If imaginative prose be really the special art of this century, Mr. Pater must rank amongst our century's most characteristic artists. In certain things he stands almost alone. The age has produced wonderful prose styles, turbid with individualism, and violent with excess of rhetoric. But in Mr. Pater, as in Cardinal Newman, we find the union of personality with perfection. He has no rival in his own sphere, and he has escaped disciples. And this, not because he has not been imitated, but because in art so fine as his there is something that, in its essence, is inimitable.

Appreciations, with an Essay on Style. By Walter Pater, Fellow of Brasenose College. (Macmillan and Co.)

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(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 24, 1890.)

IN the summer term Oxford teaches the exquisite art of idleness, one of the most important things that any University can teach, and possibly as the first-fruits of the dreaming in grey cloister and silent garden, which either makes or mars a man, there has just appeared in that lovely city a dainty and delightful volume of poems by four friends. These new young singers are Mr. Laurence Binyon, who has just gained the Newdigate; Mr. Manmohan Ghose, a young Indian of brilliant scholarship and high literary attainments who gives some culture to Christ Church; Mr. Stephen Phillips, whose recent performance of the

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Ghost in *Hamlet* at the Globe Theatre was admirable in its dignity and elocution; and Mr. Arthur Cripps, of Trinity. Particular interest attaches naturally to Mr. Ghose's work. Born in India, of purely Indian parentage, he has been brought up entirely in England, and was educated at St. Paul's School, and his verses show us how quick and subtle are the intellectual sympathies of the Oriental mind, and suggest how close is the bond of union that may some day bind India to us by other methods than those of commerce and military strength.

There is something charming in finding a young Indian using our language with such care for music and words as Mr. Ghose does. Here is one of his songs:

Over thy head, in joyful wanderings
Through heaven's wide spaces, free,
Birds fly with music in their wings;
And from the blue, rough sea
The fishes flash and leap;
There is a life of loveliest things
O'er thee, so fast asleep.

In the deep West the heavens grow heavenlier,
Eve after eve; and still
The glorious stars remember to appear;
The roses on the hill
Are fragrant as before:
Only thy face, of all that's dear,
I shall see nevermore!

It has its faults. It has a great many faults. But the lines we have set in italics are lovely. The temper of Keats, the moods of Matthew Arnold have influenced Mr. Ghose, and what better influence could a beginner have? Here are some stanzas from another of Mr. Ghose's poems:

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Deep-shaded will I lie, and deeper yet
 In night, where not a leaf its neighbour knows;
 Forget the shining of the stars, forget
 The vernal visitation of the rose;
 And, far from all delights, prepare my heart's repose.

'O crave not silence thou! too soon, too sure,
 Shall Autumn come, and through these branches weep:
 Some birds shall cease, and flowers no more endure;
 And thou beneath the mould unwilling creep,
 And silent soon shalt be in that eternal sleep.

'Green still it is, where that fair goddess strays;
 Then follow, till around thee all be sere.
 Lose not a vision of her passing face;
 Nor miss the sound of her soft robes, that here
 Sweep over the wet leaves of the fast-falling year.'

The second line is very beautiful, and the whole shows culture and taste and feeling. Mr. Ghose ought some day to make a name in our literature.

Mr. Stephen Phillips has a more solemn classical Muse. His best work is his *Orestes*:

Me in far lands did Justice call, cold queen
 Among the dead, who, after heat and haste
 At length have leisure for her steadfast voice,
 That gathers peace from the great deeps of hell.
 She call'd me, saying: I heard a cry by night!
 Go thou, and question not; within thy halls
 My will awaits fulfilment.

And she lies there,

My mother! ay, my mother now; O hair
 That once I play'd with in these halls! O eyes
 That for a moment knew me as I came,
 And lighten'd up, and trembled into love;
 The next were darkened by my hand! Ah me!
 Ye will not look upon me in that world.
 Yet thou, perchance, art happier, if thou go'st
 Into some land of wind and drifting leaves,
 To sleep without a star; but as for me,
 Hell hungers, and the restless Furies wait.

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Milton, and the method of Greek tragedy are Mr. Phillips's influences, and again we may say, with better influences could a young singer have? His verse is dignified, and has distinction.

Mr. Cripps is melodious at times, and Mr. Binyon, Oxford's latest Laureate, shows us in his lyrical ode on *Youth* that he can handle a difficult metre dexterously, and in this sonnet that he can catch the sweet echoes that sleep in the sonnets of Shakespeare:

I cannot raise my eyelids up from sleep,
But I am visited with thoughts of you;
Slumber has no refreshment half so deep
As the sweet morn, that wakes my heart anew.

I cannot put away life's trivial care,
But you straightway steal on me with delight:
My purest moments are your mirror fair;
My deepest thought finds you the truth most bright.

You are the lovely regent of my mind,
The constant sky to the unresting sea;
Yet, since 'tis you that rule me, I but find
A finer freedom in such tyranny.

Were the world's anxious kingdoms govern'd so,
Lost were their wrongs, and vanish'd half their woe!

On the whole *Primavera* is a pleasant little book, and we are glad to welcome it. It is charmingly 'got up,' and undergraduates might read it with advantage during lecture hours.

Primavera: Poems. By Four Authors. (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.)

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